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THE HISTORY OF GREAT BRITAIN,

FROM THE

FIRST INVASION OF IT BY THE ROMANS UNDER JULIUS CÆSAR.

WRITTEN ON A NEW PLAN.

By ROBERT HENRY, D.D.

ONE OF THE MINISTERS OF EDINBURGH, MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIANS OF SCOTLAND, AND OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH.

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THE HISTORY OF GREAT BRITAIN.

BOOK II.

CHAP. I.

The civil and military history of Great Britain, from the arrival of the Saxons, A. D. 449, *to the landing of William Duke of Normandy*, A. D. 1066.

SECTION I.

From the arrival of the Saxons, A. D. 449, *to* A. D. 600.

A. D. 449, to 600. Arrival of the Saxons.

THE ſuccours which the Britiſh ambaſſadors (mentioned in the concluſion of the firſt chapter of the firſt book of this work) obtained from the Saxons, came over from the continent in three large ſhips, under the conduct of two brothers, called *Hengiſt* and *Horſa*, and landed in the iſle of Thanet. They were

A.D. 449, to 600.

received with joy by the diſpirited Britons; who aſſigned them a place for their head-quarters, in the iſland where they landed; and made them the moſt ample promiſes of all neceſſary proviſions, and ſuitable rewards for their aſſiſtance [1].

Saxons and Britons defeat the Scots and Picts.

As ſoon as theſe preliminaries were ſettled, the Saxons joined the Britiſh army, and marched againſt the Scots and Picts, who had now puſhed their deſtructive ravages as far as Stamford. Near that place a bloody battle was fought, in which the Britons, inſtructed, animated, and aſſiſted by their new allies, obtained a complete victory over their old enemies, and obliged them to retire into their own country [2]. Tranſported with joy at this victory, they loaded the Saxon chiefs, and their principal followers, with benefits; which made them in no haſte to abandon a country where they were ſo well received [3].

Arrival of another army of Saxons.

The Britons, for ſome time, were ſo far from entertaining any jealouſy of their new allies, that they readily conſented to a propoſal made by Hengiſt, of ſending for a reinforcement of his countrymen, as a further ſecurity againſt any future attempts of their ancient enemies. This reinforcement, conſiſting of about five thouſand of the braveſt warriors, came over in ſeventeen ſhips, and joining the army under Hengiſt, added greatly to his ſtrength and confidence [4].

[1] Chron. Saxon. p. 12. Bedæ Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 1. c. 15.
[2] Id. ibid. H. Huntindon, l. 2. [3] R. Higden. Polychron. l. 5.
[4] Gildæ Hiſt. c. 23.

It

A.D. 449, to 600.

The Saxons resolve to settle in Britain.

It is impossible to discover whether or not Hengist and Horsa, and their followers, when they first embarked in this expedition, had formed a design of making good a settlement for themselves in Britain; but it plainly appears, from their conduct, as well as from the testimony of historians, that they entertained such a design soon after their arrival[5]. The beauty and fertility of the British plains excited them to wish, and the unwarlike character and divided state of their inhabitants, encouraged them to hope, for a solid establishment in this rich and pleasant country. As soon, therefore, as the two Saxon chieftains saw themselves at the head of a considerable army of brave determined warriors, they prepared to seize some part of those territories which they had been invited to defend. With this view they concluded a separate peace with their enemies the Picts, against whom they had engaged to wage perpetual war, and began to quarrel with their friends the Britons about their provisions and promised rewards, threatening to do themselves justice, as they called it, by force of arms; and even putting these threats in execution, by destroying the country about them with fire and sword, and killing all who fell into their hands[6].

Various conduct of the Bri-

The unhappy Britons were now effectually awakened from their delusive dreams of enjoying

5 Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 1. c. 15.

6 Id. ibid. Gild. Hist. c. 23, 24, 25.

A.D. 449, to 600.

peace and safety under the protection of the Saxons, and fully convinced of their folly in calling so fierce and faithless a people to their assistance. In their first consternation, great multitudes abandoned their country, and fled into that part of Gaul, which about this time began to be called *Britanny*, from its being chiefly inhabited by Britons; others took shelter in the most impenetrable woods, where they led a wretched savage kind of life, or even perished with hunger; while not a few, in order to preserve their lives, submitted to the most abject slavery. Many, however, on this occasion acted a more manly part, and determined to defend themselves, and their country, to the last extremity [7]. These brave and virtuous Britons, despising Vortigern, their former leader, for his vices, and hating him for his unfortunate counsels, and too intimate connections with their enemies, declined fighting under his banner, and placed his son Vortimer at their head [8].

tons on this occasion.

War between the Saxons and Britons.

A long and cruel war now broke out between the Saxons and Britons, in which many battles were fought, of which we have but very imperfect accounts. In one of these actions, near Ailesford, Horsa, one of the Saxon chieftains, was slain, by which his brother Hengist became sole commander of their united forces. This illustrious chief, about two years after, gained a great victory over the Britons, at Creecanford,

7 Gildæ Hist. c. 23, 24, 25.

8 Nennii Hist. c. 45.

now

now Crayford, which gave him the poſſeſſion of all Kent, and emboldened him to aſſume the name of *king*, having before this contented himſelf with the humbler title of *heretogen*, or *general*[9]. Thus was the firſt Saxon kingdom, that of Kent, founded, about eight years after the arrival of Hengiſt and his followers in this iſland. A.D. 449, to 600.

The new monarch of Kent, in order to ſtrengthen the Saxon intereſt in Britain, and procure comfortable ſettlements for his family and friends, invited his ſon Octo, and his nephew Ebeſſa, to collect as many followers as they could, and come over into this iſland. Theſe youthful chieftains complied with the invitation; and having plundered the Orkney iſles in their paſſage, arrived with a fleet of forty ſail on the coaſt of Northumberland; of which, together with all the country to the frith of Forth, they took poſſeſſion, without meeting with much oppoſition[10]. This was probably owing to the depopulated ſtate of the country between the two Roman walls, which had been a ſcene of war and devaſtation for near two centuries, and to the alliance and friendſhip which at this time ſubſiſted between the Picts and Saxons. Thus early were the ſouth-eaſt parts of Scotland, as well as the north of England, inhabited by the Saxons; and in thoſe parts, as well as in the Arrival of another army of Saxons.

9 Chron. Saxon. an. 455. 457. Higden. Polychron. l. 5. an. 457.

10 Nennii Hiſt. c. 37.

A.D. 449, to 600.

south of Britain, their language and their poſterity have continued to the preſent times.

Progreſs of the war between the Saxons and Britons.

Though Hengiſt had gained ſeveral victories over the Britons, they did not long allow him to enjoy his new kingdom in tranquillity. On the contrary, they fought many battles againſt him with various ſucceſs, under the conduct of Aurelius Ambroſius, who was deſcended of a Roman family, and inherited the martial virtues of that glorious people [11]. But Hengiſt obtained a great victory, A. D. 465, at Wippidfleet, where no fewer than twelve Britiſh chieftains were ſlain, and only one Saxon chief, named *Wippid*, from whom the place of battle derived its preſent name [12]. About eight years after, he gained another ſtill more deciſive victory; which ſtruck ſuch a terror into the Britons, that they gave him little further diſturbance during the remainder of his reign, which ended with his life, A. D. 488 [13].

Æſc, Octo, Hermenric, and Ethelbert, ſucceſſively kings of Kent.

Hengiſt, the firſt king of Kent, and firſt Saxon monarch in Britain, was ſucceeded by his ſon Æſc, who reigned over his little kingdom twenty-four years in profound tranquillity, and left it in that condition to his ſon Octo, who began his reign A. D. 512 [14]. This prince was not ſo fortunate as his father had been; for in his reign, which laſted twenty-two years, the countries of Eſſex and Middleſex were taken from him by the Eaſt-Saxons. Octo was ſucceeded by his

11 Bedæ Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 1. c. 16.
12 Chron. Saxon. A. D. 465.
13 Id. ibid.
14 Will. Malmſb. c. 1.

ſon

A.D. 449, to 600.

ſon Hermenric, A. D. 534, who reigned thirty-two years, but performed nothing memorable[15]. Ethelbert, the ſon and ſucceſſor of Hermenric, was the greateſt of the Kentiſh kings. In a long and proſperous reign of fifty-ſix years, he obtained many victories, enlarged his dominions, and gained a great aſcendant over all the other Saxon princes of his time. Ethelbert died A. D. 616, and was ſucceeded by his ſon Eadbald, whoſe hiſtory will be purſued in the ſecond ſection of this chapter.

Arrival of another army of Saxons, who founded the kingdom of Suſſex.

The ſucceſs of Hengiſt and his followers, encouraged other Saxon chiefs to try their fortunes, and attempt ſettlements in this iſland. One of theſe, named *Ælla*, arrived A. D. 477, with his three ſons, Cymen, Wlencing, and Ciſſa, and a train of martial followers. They landed at Cymenſhore, near Wittering, defeating a body of Britons, who attempted to prevent their landing[16]. Ælla defeated the Britons in a great battle at Mecredeſburn, A. D. 485, and took and deſtroyed Andereda, the ſtrongeſt fortreſs in thoſe parts, A. D. 490[17]. After theſe ſucceſſes he aſſumed the name of *king*, and founded the kingdom of Suſſex; in the government of which he was ſucceeded by his youngeſt ſon Ciſſa, A. D. 515, who had a very long reign. Before the death of Ciſſa this little kingdom became ſo inconſiderable, that his immediate ſucceſſor is not ſo much as named in hiſtory[18].

15 Hen. Hunt. l. 2.
16 Chron. Saxon. p. 14.
17 Id. ibid.
18 Hen. Hunt. l. 2.

A. D. 449, to 600.

Arrival of other Saxon armies, which founded the kingdom of Weſſex.

Cerdic, another Saxon chieftain, with his ſon Cynric, and a band of choſen warriors, arrived in Britain A. D. 495, and landed in the weſt, at a place which from him was afterwards called *Cerdicſhore* [19]. On the very day of his landing, he engaged and defeated an army of Britons, and from thenceforward continued to wage war againſt them without intermiſſion, for more than twenty years, with various ſucceſs [20]. In the firſt year of the ſixth century, Cerdic received a reinforcement from Germany, under the command of Porta, and his two ſons, Bieda and Megla, who landed at a place ſince called *Portſmouth*. By the aſſiſtance of this reinforcement, he proſecuted the war againſt the Britons with greater vigour than he had done before, and gained ſo many victories, that he aſſumed the title of *king*, and founded the kingdom of the Weſt-Saxons, A. D. 519 [21].

Ambroſius and Arthur command the Britons againſt Cerdic.

Cerdic, the founder of the Weſt-Saxon kingdom, met with a more ſteady and obſtinate reſiſtance from the Britons, than any of the other Saxon chieftains who founded kingdoms in this iſland. This circumſtance was probably owing to the ſuperior courage and abilities of Aurelius Ambroſius, and the famous prince Arthur, who ſucceſſively commanded the Britiſh forces againſt Cerdic and his followers. The firſt of theſe great generals, to whom the Britons gave the name of *Natanleod* (preſerver of the people), fell

[19] Chron. Saxon. p. 15. [20] Id. ibid.
[21] Id. ibid. p. 17. Hen. Huntingdon, l. 2.

in

in battle, with five thouſand of his braveſt troops, A. D. 508 [22]. The great actions of Arthur, who ſucceeded Ambroſius in the command of the Britiſh armies, have been celebrated in ſuch romantic ſtrains by the Britiſh bards, and blended with ſo many extravagant fables by Jeffrey of Monmouth, that not only the truth of thoſe actions aſcribed to him, but even the reality of his exiſtence, hath been called in queſtion [23]. There ſeems, however, to be ſufficient evidence, that there was a brave and virtuous prince of this name, in thoſe times, who had the chief command among the Britons, and at their head obtained ſeveral victories over the Saxons, though it certainly exceeds the power of the greateſt human ſagacity to diſtinguiſh what is true from what is fabulous in his hiſtory [24]. The laſt and greateſt of thoſe victories was that of Mountbadon, near Bath, A. D. 520 [25]. This victory gave ſo great a check to the arms of Cerdic, and his ſon Cynric, that they made little or no progreſs in their conqueſts for ſeveral years. But having received ſome freſh reinforcements from the continent, they defeated the Britons, A. D. 527, at a place, from thence called *Cerdicsford*, and about three years after made an entire conqueſt of the iſle of Wight [26]. In a word, Cerdic, after a long and bloody ſtruggle of near forty years, ſubdued thoſe countries which are now called

A. D. 449, to 600.

[22] Chron. Saxon. p. 18. [23] Gaulfrid. Monumut. l. 9, 10.
[24] See Biographia Britannica, vol. 1. p. 197, &c.
[25] Hiſt. Gildæ, p. 9. Hen. Hunt. l. 2. [26] Chron. Saxon. p. 19.

Harp-

A.D. 449, to 600.

Hampſhire, *Dorſetſhire*, *Wiltſhire*, *Berkſhire*, and the iſle of Wight. At his death, which happened A. D. 534[27], he was ſucceeded in the throne of Weſſex by his valiant ſon Cynric, who had been the companion of all his toils and victories. This prince reigned twenty-ſix years, and ſupported the character which he had obtained, of a brave and prudent general, by gaining ſeveral victories over the Britons[28]. Cynric was ſucceeded, A. D. 560, by his ſon Ceaulin, who was ſtill more ambitious and enterpriſing than his father and grandfather had been. Being aſſiſted by his brother Cutha, he defeated Ethelbert king of Kent, A. D. 568; and nine years after obtained a great victory over the Britons, at Durham in Gloceſterſhire, killing three of their princes, Commail, Condidan, and Farinmail[29]. By theſe and ſeveral other victories, he enlarged the boundaries of the Weſt-Saxon kingdom, by adding thoſe countries which are now called *Devonſhire* and *Somerſetſhire*, to his former territories. At length, however, this prince experienced a moſt grievous reverſe of fortune, both in his family and government; for he loſt by death his valiant brother Cutha, and a ſon of the ſame name, no leſs valiant. The other Saxon princes, dreading his ambition, formed a confederacy againſt him, into which ſome of the Britons alſo entered; and he was defeated by their united forces at Wodenſburgh, A. D. 591.

27 Chron. Saxon. p. 18. 28 Ibid. p. 19, 20. 29 Ibid. p. 22.

A.D. 449, to 600.

To complete his misfortunes, his own ſubjects revolted, and drove him into exile, where he ſoon after died [30]. The unhappy Ceaulin was ſucceeded by his nephew Ceolric, who reigned only five years, and dying A. D. 596, left his dominions to his brother Ceolwolf. This prince, being of a martial ſpirit, had wars not only with the Britons, but alſo with the Saxons, Scots, and Picts, which continued through his whole reign of fourteen years [31].

The arrival of other armies of Saxons, and founding of the kingdoms of the Eaſt-Saxons, Eaſt-Angles, and Mercians.

The Saxons having thus far ſucceeded in their attempts, and eſtabliſhed the three ſmall kingdoms of Kent, Suſſex, and Weſſex, other bands of adventurers, from the ſame country, were thereby encouraged to try their fortunes, and endeavour to obtain ſettlements in this iſland. Theſe adventurers landed on the eaſt coaſts of Britain, at different times, and under different leaders, whoſe names and actions have not been preſerved in hiſtory [32]. By degrees, however, theſe unwelcome gueſts gained ſo firm a footing, and penetrated ſo far into the country, that three of their chieftains aſſumed the title of *kings*, and founded three other ſmall kingdoms in the eaſt and midland parts of Britain. Theſe were the kingdoms of the Eaſt-Saxons, the Eaſt-Angles, and Mercians. The territories which compoſed the kingdom of the Eaſt-Saxons, were chiefly diſmembered from that of Kent; and conſiſted of the counties of Eſſex, Middleſex, and part of

30 W. Malmſ. l. 1. c. 2. 31 Id. ibid.
32 Hen. Hunt. l. 2.

Hert-

A. D. 449, to 600.

Hertfordshire: its first monarch was named *Erkenwin*; but the time when he began to reign, and the actions which he performed, are equally unknown [33]. The kingdom of the East-Angles consisted of the counties of Cambridge, Suffolk, and Norfolk: its first king was Uffa, who began his reign A. D. 575; and from him all his successors in that kingdom had the surname of *Uffans*. The kingdom of the Mercians comprehended all the middle counties of England to the east of the Severn, and south of Yorkshire and Lancashire: its first sovereign was Creda, who began his reign A. D. 585 [34]. The princes who reigned in these three petty kingdoms in the sixth century, performed nothing worthy of being recorded in history.

Kingdom of Northumberland founded.

Though a colony of Saxons (as hath been already mentioned) had settled on the east coast of Britain, between the walls of Severus and Antoninus Pius, not long after the middle of the fifth century, we know very little of the history of that colony for the greatest part of a century after their arrival. These Saxons being at a great distance from their countrymen in the south, and surrounded with enemies on all hands, continued long in a weak condition; and being also under the command of several petty chieftains, none of these had the presumption to assume the name of *king* [35]. At length, however, they received a very powerful reinforcement from Ger-

33 Hen. Hunt. l. 2.
34 Id. ibid.
35 W. Malmf. l. 1. c. 3.

many

many in a fleet of fifty ships, which arrived at Flamborough A. D. 547, under the command of Ida; who, being a prince of great wisdom and valour, assumed the royalty, and founded the kingdom of Northumberland, or rather of Bernicia, soon after his arrival [36]. The castle of Bamburgh, built by Ida, was the capital of this most northerly kingdom of the Saxons; which comprehended not only the present county of Northumberland, but the counties of the Merse and the three Lothians, or the whole eastern coast of the ancient Roman province of Valentia. Ælla, another Saxon chieftain, having subdued all the country between the Humber and the Tyne, founded another little state in these parts, which was called the kingdom of *Deira* [37]. These two kingdoms were united, not long after, in the person of Ethelfrid, the grandson of Ida; who married Acca, the daughter of Ælla; and having expelled her brother Edwin, added his territories to his own, and thereby founded the powerful kingdom of Northumberland [38]. A. D. 449, to 600.

In this manner were the seven Saxon kingdoms, commonly called *the heptarchy*, founded in that part of Britain, which soon after began to be called *England*, from the Angles, which were the most numerous and powerful tribe of the Saxons [39]. The heptarchy completed.

36 Chron. Saxon. p. 19. Hen. Hunt. l. 2. c. 3.
37 Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 2. c. 1. Annal. Beverl. p. 78.
38 W. Malms. l. 1. c. 3. 39 Camd. Britan. p. 168.

BEFORE

A.D. 449, to 600.

BEFORE we profecute the hiſtory of theſe Saxon kingdoms any further, it may not be improper to take a very ſhort view of the ſtate of the other nations who inhabited Britain in this period, and of the moſt important events which happened among theſe nations.

Britiſh ſtates.

Though the Saxons had by degrees diſpoſſeſſed the Britons of the moſt valuable part of their country, in which they had erected ſeven kingdoms; yet that unhappy people ſtill continued to poſſeſs a very large tract on the weſt coaſt of Britain, extending from the Land's-end to the frith of Clyde. All the inhabitants of this extenſive country were deſcended from the ſame anceſtors, ſpoke the ſame language, profeſſed the ſame religion, and were in all reſpects the ſame people, except that they were not united under one ſovereign, which would have rendered them invincible, but ſubjected to a prodigious number of petty tyrants, who were almoſt conſtantly at war with one another, and ſeldom joined their forces to reſiſt the common enemy. Gildas, the moſt ancient of our hiſtorians, who was himſelf a Briton, and flouriſhed in thoſe times, gives a moſt ſhocking character of five of theſe princes, who were cotemporaries, and domineered in their ſeveral diſtricts over their wretched ſubjects [40]. It would be highly improper, on many accounts, to ſwell this work with laborious inveſtigations of the genealogies of thoſe ancient Britiſh princes,

[40] Epiſtola Gildæ, p. 1, 2, 3.

or

or minute details of their mutual wars, which could not be rendered either inſtructive or entertaining. If any of our readers have a taſte for ſuch inquiries, they may conſult the works quoted below [41]. It is ſufficient to obſerve, that in this extenſive tract of country there were four conſiderable ſtates or principalities in this period, viz. thoſe of Cornwall, South-Wales, North-Wales, and Cumberland. In each of theſe ſtates there was commonly one prince who was more powerful than the other chieftains or heads of clans, and had ſome degree of authority over them, though each of theſe chieftains was a kind of ſovereign in his own little diſtrict. A. D. 449, to 600.

That part of Britain which lay on the north ſide of the wall of Antoninus Pius, and of the friths of Forth and Clyde, was inhabited, in this period, by two warlike nations, the Scots and Picts; the former poſſeſſing the weſtern, and the latter the eaſtern diviſion of that country. Theſe nations made a conſiderable figure in the third, fourth, and fifth centuries, by their frequent incurſions into the Roman provinces, which are recorded by the Greek and Roman writers; but after the departure of the Romans, and the arrival of the Saxons, we loſe ſight of them almoſt entirely for ſome time; and their hiſtory becomes remarkably obſcure for more than two State of the Scots and Picts.

[41] Dr. Borlaſe's antiq. Cornwall, c. 13. Mr. Rowland's Mona antiqua, ſect. 11. p. 134. Harding's Chron. Mr. Vaughan's Diſſertation on Britiſh chronol. and Britiſh antiquities revived. Carte's Hiſt. vol. 1. p. 210, &c.

cen-

A. D. 449, to 600.

centuries. This obſcurity is not owing to their having performed no actions worthy of remembrance in this period, but either to their having had no hiſtorians to preſerve the memory of thoſe actions, or to their having loſt the works of thoſe hiſtorians, by the injuries of time, and various accidents [42]. From the time of the battle between the Britons and Saxons on one ſide, and the Scots and Picts on the other, near Stamford, A. D. 449, to the beginning of the ſixth century, we know very little with certainty of the hiſtory of theſe two laſt nations. It is highly probable, that, during this period, they were engaged in wars againſt each other, or againſt their common enemies the Saxons ſettled between the walls: but we have no authentic accounts of the particulars of theſe wars. Many modern writers have indeed filled up this chaſm in the annals of the northern parts of Britain, with formal details of the names, actions, characters, and ſucceſſions of the kings of the Scots. But as a little truth is of more value in hiſtory than many fables, we ſhall not abuſe our readers with a repetition of theſe fabulous, or at beſt uncertain tales [43].

Fergus King of Scots.

It muſt, however, be acknowledged, that though we do not know the particulars of thoſe wars which were carried on by the Scots and Picts in the latter part of the fifth century, it ſeems very probable that the Scots gained ſome

42 See Innes's critical eſſay, vol. 2. p. 548—586.

43 See Fordun, Boece, Major, Buchanan, Maitland, &c.

advantages in these wars, extended their territories, and became a more powerful and better regulated nation, than they had been in any former period. For there is sufficient evidence, from several monuments of the ancient history of Scotland, which have escaped all the injuries of time, and the rage of enemies, that about the beginning of the sixth century, most probably A. D. 503, all the different clans of the Scots in Britain were united and formed into one nation, by Fergus the son of Erth, who was certainly the first monarch of the Scots nation of whose existence we have any tolerable evidence [44].

A.D. 449, to 600.

The dominions of this first king of Scots are described by two of our most ancient chronicles, in these words: "Fergus filius Erth fuit primus "qui de semine Chonare susceptit regnum Albaniæ, *i. e.* a monte Drumalban usque ad mare "Hiberniæ, et ad Inche-Gall." The sea of Ireland is a boundary which needs no explanation. The western islands of Scotland are called *Inche-Galle* by the highlanders of the continent to this day. The only question is concerning the mountain Drumalban, the eastern boundary of this first kingdom of the Scots, which is believed, by our most intelligent antiquaries, to be that ridge of high mountains which runs all the way from Lochlomond, near Dumbarton, on the west, to the frith of Tayne, on the east [45].

Boundaries of the kingdoms of the Scots and Picts.

44 See the four old chronicles of the kings of Scotland, published by father Innes, in his Appendix, N° 4, 5, 6, 7.

45 Dr. M'Pherson's Dissertation, diss. 18. p. 332.

A. D. 449, to 600.

All the reſt of Scotland, to the north of the frith of Forth, and the wall of Antoninus, was in the poſſeſſion of the Picts, and conſtituted the Pictiſh kingdom, which was at leaſt as ancient as that of the Scots, though its antiquities are ſtill more obſcure, occaſioned by the total ſubverſion of that kingdom, and deſtruction of all the ancient monuments of its hiſtory, in the ninth century.

Kings of the Scots.

Fergus I. king of Scots, according to the only authentic monuments of our ancient hiſtory, reigned three years; and dying A. D. 506, was ſucceeded by his ſon Domangart, or Dongard; who reigned five years, and was ſucceeded, A. D. 511, by his ſon Congal [46]. This laſt prince, after a reign of twenty-four years, dying A. D. 535, was ſucceeded by his brother Gauran, who reigned twenty-two years. Though Gauran, at his death, left a ſon named *Edhan*, he was ſucceeded by his nephew Conal, the ſon of Congal, who reigned fourteen years, and died A. D. 571. The later Scots hiſtorians, Fordun, Boece, Major, and Buchanan, who are mere moderns in compariſon of thoſe remote ages, have inſerted ſeveral kings between Fergus and his great-grandſon Edhan the ſon of Gauran, whoſe names are not to be found in any of our genuine and really ancient monuments, who are therefore to be conſidered as the creatures of their own invention [47]. Theſe writers have alſo aſcribed a variety of actions and adventures to all theſe

[46] See the ancient chronicles, apud Innes, Appen. N° 4, 5, 6.

[47] Innes's Critical Eſſays, vol. 2. p. 689, &c.

princes,

princes, real and imaginary (which may be seen in their works), for which they ſeem to have had little or no authority, and which, on that account, merit little or no attention from the friends of truth and genuine hiſtory. A.D. 449, to 600.

Edhan, or Aidan, the ſon of Gauran, ſucceeded his couſin Conal the ſon of Congal, A.D. 571. A few faint rays of light now begin to appear in the hiſtory of the Scots. The name, and ſome of the actions of Aidan, are mentioned by ſeveral ancient authors, who are not unworthy of credit, and who lived at no great diſtance from the times in which he flouriſhed. On the death of Conal, Aidan returned from Ireland (where he had lived ſome years in a kind of exile), and was advanced to the throne, chiefly by the influence of St. Columba, who was, at that time, the great oracle of the Scots and Picts, in civil as well as religious matters [48]. Soon after his acceſſion, he eſtabliſhed a more regular adminiſtration of juſtice in his dominions, and exerted himſelf in ſuppreſſing ſeveral bands of robbers with which the country was infeſted [49]. While he was thus employed, a war broke out between him and Brude king of the Picts, who refuſed to deliver up certain fugitives from juſtice, who had taken ſhelter in his territories: a battle was fought near Dunkeld, in which Aidan obtained the victory, but with the loſs of one of his ſons, and many of his ſubjects. St. Columba, who Aidan king of Scots.

[48] Ogygia, p. 43. Boethius Scot. Hiſt. l. 8. Buchan. l. 5.
[49] Id. ibid.

A.D. 449, to 600.

was equally revered by both the Caledonian monarchs, hearing of theſe ſcenes of ſlaughter with much concern, interpoſed his good offices, and brought about a peace [50]. Aidan, after this, was engaged in two ſucceſſive wars, againſt Brude king of the Picts, and Ethelfred king of the Northumbrian Saxons; in the courſe of which ſeveral bloody battles were fought with various ſucceſs [51]. In the laſt of theſe battles, which happened A. D. 603, at a place called *Dogſaſtane*, being deſerted by his allies the Strathcluyd or Cumbrian Britons, he received a total overthrow, in which he loſt the greateſt part of his army [52]. The good old king did not long ſurvive this grievous diſaſter, but died about the beginning of the year 605, in the thirty-fourth year of his reign, and ſeventy-eighth of his age [53].

We know little or nothing of the hiſtory of the Pictiſh princes who flouriſhed in that period which is the ſubject of this ſection, except their names, and the length of their reigns, which have been preſerved in an ancient chronicle, publiſhed by Mr. Innes, in his Critical Eſſay on the ancient Inhabitants of Scotland [54].

50 Ogygia, p. 43. Boethius Scot. Hiſt. l. 8. Buchan. l. 5. Adamnan. Vit. S. Columb. l. 1. c. 7.

51 See Biograph. Britan. v. 1. p. 68.

52 Bedæ Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 1. c. 34. Chron. Saxon. p. 24.

53 Id. ibid. 54 Append. N° I.

SECTION II.

The civil and military history of Great Britain, from A. D. 600 *to the accession of Egbert, the first English monarch,* A. D. 801.

A.D. 600, to 801. State of Britain.

AT the beginning of the seventh century, all the south and east coasts of Britain, from Cornwall to the frith of Forth, were possessed by various tribes of Saxons, Iutes, and Angles, divided into seven petty states or kingdoms, viz. those of Wessex, Sussex, Kent, Essex, East-Anglia, Mercia, and Northumberland. The east coasts of Caledonia, from the frith of Forth to Caithness, were occupied by the Picts, now united into one kingdom; and the north and west coasts of that country, from Caithness to the frith of Clyde, with the adjacent islands, were inhabited by the Scots, now also formed into one monarchy. Almost all the western coasts, from the frith of Clyde to the Land's-end, were still in the possession of the posterity of the ancient Britons, divided into many little principalities, whose numbers, names, and boundaries, were perpetually changing, by the division of the territories of the fathers among their sons, by conquests and other accidents.

An island inhabited by so many fierce and warlike nations, animated with the most implacable enmity against each other, derived from their

A. D. 600, to 801.

anceſtors, and every day more and more inflamed by mutual injuries, could not fail to be a ſcene of much confuſion, and of many wars and revolutions. To form theſe wars and revolutions into one clear, perſpicuous, unperplexed narration, is extremely difficult, if not impoſſible, though it muſt be attempted.

The hiſtory of the ſeveral Britiſh ſtates, regulated by the chronology of the Weſt-Saxons.

As all the other ſix kingdoms of the Anglo-Saxons fell gradually under the dominion of the Weſt-Saxon princes (from whom Egbert, the firſt Engliſh monarch, and his ſucceſſors, were deſcended), it may not be improper to give our firſt attention to the hiſtory of theſe princes, and to regulate our introduction of the moſt memorable events which happened in all the other ſtates of Britain, by the chronology of the Weſt-Saxon kingdom. By this means the thread of our narration will be preſerved unbroken, and ſome degree of unity and order introduced into this moſt intricate and perplexing period of the hiſtory of Britain.

Cinigeſil and Quicelm kings of Weſſex.

Upon the death of Ceolwulf king of Weſſex, A. D. 611, Cinigeſil, his nephew, the ſon of Ceolric, obtained the government of that kingdom; and ſoon after aſſumed his brother Quicelm to be his partner in the throne [1]. Theſe two princes, who were juſtly admired for the warmth and conſtancy of their fraternal affections, defeated the Britons A. D. 614, at Beamdune, now Bampton, in Devonſhire [2].

[1] Chron. Saxon. p. 25.
[2] Id. ibid. Hen. Hunt. l. 2. W. Malmſ. c. 2.

At

A.D. 600, to 801.

Ethelfred king of Northumberland.

At the acceſſion of Cinigeſil to the government of Weſſex, Ethelfred king of Northumberland was the moſt powerful and enterpriſing prince among the Anglo-Saxons. Having married Acca, the daughter of Alla king of Deira, he got poſſeſſion of that kingdom on the death of his father-in-law, A. D. 588, though Alla left an infant-ſon named *Edwin*, who lived many years in exile, and became afterwards very famous[3]. Ethelfred ſucceeded his father Athelric in the kingdom of Bernicea, A. D. 590, and by that means united the two Northumbrian kingdoms into one. After the great victory which he obtained over Aidan king of Scots, A. D. 603, he had leiſure to purſue his ambitious ſchemes for the enlargement of his dominions, without dreading any interruption from the north. Accordingly he engaged in a long war againſt the neighbouring Britiſh princes; in the courſe of which he obtained a great victory over Brocmail king of Powis, near Cheſter, A. D. 613. Brocmail, before the battle, had perſuaded 1250 of the monks of Banchor to accompany his army, and pray for his ſucceſs, promiſing them his protection. Ethelfred made his firſt attack upon theſe monks, and ſlew no fewer than 1200 of them; which ſtruck ſuch terror into the Britiſh army, that they fled, after a very feeble reſiſtance[4]. By this victory the city of Cheſter, and the adjacent country, fell under the dominion of the conqueror.

3 W. Malmſ. c. 3.

4 Bedæ Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 2. c. 2.

A.D. 600, to 801.

Edwin recovers the kingdom of Northumberland.

Though Ethelfred was thus ſucceſsful in his martial enterpriſes, he was far from being eaſy in his mind. Prince Edwin, his injured brother-in-law, and lawful heir to one half of his dominions, had eſcaped all his ſnares, and was now grown up to man's eſtate. This prince had been carried in his infancy, by ſome friends of his family, to the court of Cadvan prince of North Wales, where he was educated; but an unfortunate quarrel having happened between him and Cadwallon, the eldeſt ſon of Cadvan, he was obliged to abandon the territories of that prince [5]. After this he wandered for ſome time from place to place, in continual fear and danger from the machinations of Ethelfred, till at length he found an aſylum in the court of Ceorl king of Mercia. Here he continued ſome years, married Quoenburga, daughter of Ceorl; and by her had two ſons, Oſfred and Eadfred. But not finding himſelf ſecure from the power of his unrelenting perſecutor, even in the court of his father-in-law, he retired from thence, and put himſelf into the hands of Redwald king of Eaſt-Anglia, who promiſed him his protection. Redwald was by far the beſt and greateſt prince that ever governed the little kingdom of the Eaſt-Angles, and for ſome time reſiſted all the threats and promiſes of Ethelfred. At length, however, theſe promiſes became ſo tempting, and the danger of rejecting them appeared ſo great, that

5 Vaughan's Diſſertat. on Britiſh Chronol.

Red-

A. D. 600, to 801.

Redwald's reſolution began to fail, and he was on the point of making a ſacrifice of his honour to his intereſt, by delivering up his royal gueſt into the hands of his enemy. Edwin received a ſecret intimation of his danger from a faithful friend, who adviſed him to make his eſcape: but this unhappy prince, being weary of a wandering life, and not knowing whither to fly, or whom to truſt, reſolved calmly to wait the event, without betraying any diſtruſt of his protector. This proved a fortunate reſolution; for Redwald having communicated his thoughts concerning Edwin to his queen, that princeſs painted the infamy of betraying his friend in ſuch ſtrong colours, that he changed his mind, and determined to aſſiſt him in recovering his kingdom. With this view he raiſed an army with all poſſible ſecrecy and expedition, and marched directly into Northumberland. Ethelfred was greatly aſtoniſhed at this unexpected attack; but being full of courage, and truſting to his good fortune, which had never yet forſaken him, he collected a ſmall army in haſte, with which he met his enemies on the eaſt banks of the river Idle. Redwald had drawn up his army in excellent order in three bodies; the firſt of which was commanded by his eldeſt ſon, named *Rainer*, the ſecond by himſelf, and the third by Edwin. Ethelfred made a furious attack upon the firſt of theſe bodies, and killed its commander with his own hand. Encouraged with this ſucceſs, he raſhly ruſhed upon the ſecond diviſion; where he

was

A.D. 600, to 801.

was overpowered and slain, and all his army cut in pieces. This victory was so complete, that Edwin met with no further resistance, but took peaceable possession of the whole kingdom of Northumberland A. D. 617, Ethelfred's seven sons having abandoned their country, and fled into Scotland[6].

Edwin escapes an assassination.

Edwin, educated in the school of adversity, proved one of the best and greatest of the Anglo-Saxon kings[7]. He established the most perfect police and regular administration of justice in his own dominions, and was, either through love or fear, respected, and in some degree obeyed, by all the other princes of the Heptarchy[8]. Quicelm, king of the West-Saxons, bore this superiority of Edwin's with the greatest impatience, and attempted to destroy him by the most dishonourable means. He sent one Eumer as his ambassador to Edwin, A. D. 626, with instructions to kill that prince with a poisoned dagger, which he carried concealed under his robe. When this pretended ambassador, but real assassin, was introduced to an audience of the Northumbrian monarch in his palace at Aldby, on the banks of the river Derwent, he pulled out his dagger in the midst of his harangue, and aimed a violent blow at the king; who was on

6 Chron. Sax. p. 27. Bedæ Hist. Eccl. l. 2. c. 12. Hen. Hunt. l. 2. W. Malmf. c. 3.

7 This prince was most probably the founder of the castle and city of Edinburgh, which was anciently called *Edwinsburgh*.

8 Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 2. c. 14. W. Malmf. l. 1. c. 3.

this

this occaſion preſerved from certain death, by the generous heroic affection of Lilla, one of his courtiers, who intercepted the blow with his own body, and fell down dead on the ſpot. The treacherous murderer was ſoon diſpatched by the guards, though he ſlew another of the king's ſervants, named *Frodhert*, in the ſcuffle [9]. Edwin, juſtly incenſed at this baſe attempt upon his life, marched an army into the territories of the Weſt-Saxons, and took a ſevere revenge [10]. A. D. 600, to 801.

Edwin had hitherto been ſucceſsful in all his enterpriſes, and victorious over all his enemies; but a dangerous and formidable rival now appeared upon the ſtage. This was Penda, grandſon of Creda, who mounted the throne of Mercia A. D. 626. Penda was one of the fierceſt and moſt bloody tyrants that ever diſgraced royalty; and though he was fifty years of age when he began his reign, he lived to be the deſtruction of many excellent princes, and the author of many calamities to his country [11]. He ſlew in battle no fewer than three kings of the Eaſt-Angles, Sigbert, Egric, and Annas, who were unhappily his neighbours and cotemporaries [12]. He invaded the territories of the two brothers, kings of Weſſex, and fought a bloody battle againſt them near Cirenceſter, which was ended by night, before victory had declared on either ſide. Next morning, finding that he had ſuſ- War between Edwin and Penda king of Mercia.

9 Bedæ Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 2. c. 9.
10 Id. ibid.
11 W. Malmſ. l. 1. c. 3.
12 Id. ibid.

A.D. 600, to 801.

tained a great loſs of men in the preceding battle, he conſented to make peace with the royal brothers, that he might be at leiſure to turn his whole forces againſt Edwin king of Northumberland, his moſt powerful rival, and chief object of his malice[13]. To ſecure his ſucceſs in this enterpriſe, he entered into an alliance with Cadwallon prince of Wales, who had not yet forgotten his quarrel with Edwin in his youth. Theſe two princes having united their forces, invaded Northumberland with a very great army, and defeated and killed Edwin near Hatfield, on October 12th, A. D. 633[14]. This defeat was exceedingly fatal to the army, the family, and dominions of Edwin; his army being almoſt entirely cut in pieces in the action; his children either ſlain in the battle, or driven into exile, and his dominions deſolated by the ferocious conquerors with fire and ſword[15].

History of Northumberland continued.

After Penda and Cadwallon had returned into their own dominions from that ſcene of deſolation which they had occaſioned in the north, Oſric, a couſin of Edwin's, ſeized the kingdom of Deira; and Eanfred, the eldeſt ſon of Ethelfred, returning from Scotland, was acknowledged king of Bernicia[16]. But theſe princes did not long enjoy their dignity, being both killed by Cadwallon in the year 634; a year which was eſteemed unfortunate and accurſed by the people

[13] Hen. Hunt. l. 2.
[14] Chron. Saxon. p. 29.
[15] Bedæ Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 2.
[16] Chron. Saxon. p. 30.

of

of Northumberland even in the days of Venerable Bede, on account of the apoſtaſy and death of theſe two kings, and the many direful calamities which befel their ſubjects[17]. Cadwallon, who had been the chief author of theſe calamities, was not much longer allowed to enjoy the cruel delight which he took in deſtroying his fellow-creatures. For Oſwald, the ſecond ſon of Ethelfred, after the death of his brother, with whom he returned from Scotland, collected a ſmall army of brave and reſolute men, who were determined to deliver their country, or periſh in the attempt. With this little army he aſſaulted, defeated, and ſlew Cadwallon, at a place called *Heſenfield*, now *Benfield*, in Northumberland, A. D. 635[18]. By this great victory, Oſwald obtained poſſeſſion of the whole kingdom of Northumberland, which he ſoon reſtored to its former proſperity by his wiſe and mild adminiſtration. A. D. 600, to 861.

We are not informed in what manner the ever-reſtleſs and turbulent Penda, king of Mercia, was employed in this interval. But at length obſerving that Oſwald, king of Northumberland, had arrived at a degree of power and proſperity equal to that of his great predeceſſor Edwin, his jealouſy was awakened, and he reſolved on his deſtruction. To accompliſh this he declared war againſt him, which was carried on for ſome years with various ſucceſs. At laſt a deciſive battle Wars between Oſwald king of Northumberland and Penda.

[17] Bedæ Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 3. c. 1.

[18] Id. ibid. c. 2.

A. D. 600, to 801.

was fought on Auguſt 5th, A. D. 642, at a place called *Maſerfilth*, in which the good king Oſwald was defeated and ſlain, in the thirty-eighth year of his age, and eleventh of his reign[19]. Penda, as uſual, made a cruel uſe of his victory; and after he had done all the miſchief he could in the open country, beſieged Bebbanburgh, the capital city of Bernicia. Here he met with an unexpected repulſe, which Beda aſcribes to the wonder-working prayers of Aidan, biſhop of Holy-Iſland. After Penda had made many aſſaults without ſucceſs, he collected an immenſe quantity of wood and other combuſtible materials, which he piled up as near the walls as poſſible; and when he obſerved the wind bearing ſtrong towards the city, he ſet fire to the pile, in hopes of burning the town. But when the flames were ſurmounting the walls, and threatening all within them with deſtruction, the wind ſuddenly changed, and blew them with ſtill greater violence on the beſiegers, burning ſome of them to death, and obliging the reſt to fly[20]. After the death of Oſwald, the Northumbrian kingdom was again divided, Oſwi his brother ſucceeding him in Bernicia, and Oſwin his couſin in Deira.

Wars between Cenwal king of Weſſex, and Penda king of Mercia, &c.

Cinigeſil king of Weſſex died A. D. 643 (his royal brother Quicelm having died a few years before), and was ſucceeded by his ſon Cenwal. This prince, ſoon after his acceſſion, divorced

[19] Bedæ Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 3. c. 9.

[20] Id. ibid. c. 16.

his

his queen, who was ſiſter to Penda king of Mercia: an action which drew upon him, as he might have foreſeen, the indignation of that powerful and impatient monarch; who invaded his dominions, defeated him in ſeveral battles, and at laſt obliged him to abandon his country, and take ſhelter in the court of Annas, king of the Eaſt-Angles, A. D. 645[21]. When he had remained there about three years in exile, he found an opportunity of recovering his kingdom, which he thenceforward defended with great valour and ſucceſs, during a long reign of thirty-one years[22]. The furious Penda being enraged at Annas for the kind reception he had given to Cenwal in his diſtreſs, invaded his territories A. D. 654, killed him in battle, and cut almoſt his whole army in pieces[23]. But heaven was now preparing to take vengeance on this hoary tyrant, and deſtroyer of ſo many kings. Though he was connected with Oſwi king of Northumberland, by a double marriage between their children (Alchfred, the ſon of Oſwi, being married to Cyneburga, the daughter of Penda, and Peada, the ſon of Penda, to Alchfleda, the daughter of Oſwi), nothing could diſſuade him from invading the territories of that prince. Oſwi, remembering that two of his greateſt predeceſſors, Edwin and Oſwald, had been ſlain, and innumerable calamities brought upon his

A.D. 600, to 801.

21 Chron. Saxon. p. 32. 22 Hen. Hunt. l. 2. W. Malmſ. c. 2.
23 Hen. Hunt. l. 2.

country,

A. D. 600, to 801.

country, by this dreadful adverſary, endeavoured to avert the impending ſtorm, by offering the moſt valuable preſents. But all theſe offers were rejected with diſdain, and Penda entered Northumberland at the head of a powerful army, accompanied by Ethelhirc king of the Eaſt-Angles, and Edelwald king of Deira, his allies, or rather vaſſals; threatening to extirpate the whole inhabitants without exception. Oſwi, perceiving that nothing under heaven could preſerve himſelf, his family, and ſubjects, from deſtruction, but their own activity and courage, collected all his forces, and boldly marched to attack his enemies, though greatly inferior to them in numbers. The two hoſtile armies met A. D. 655, on the banks of a river, then called *Wenuaid*, now *Broad-Arc*, which runs by Leeds, where a bloody battle was fought; in which the Northumbrians, exerting the moſt deſperate valour, and fighting for their very exiſtence as a nation, obtained a complete victory, killed Penda and Ethelhirc, and about thirty other chieftains, with a prodigious number of their followers[24]. By this great victory, Oſwi not only preſerved his own dominions from ruin, but got poſſeſſion of the whole kingdom of Mercia; the ſouthern part of which beyond the Trent he voluntarily beſtowed upon Peada, the eldeſt ſon of Penda, and his own ſon-in-law. But this prince being ſlain ſoon after by treachery, Oſwi governed the

[24] Bedæ Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 3. c. 24.

Mercian

Mercian territories about three years by his lieutenants; who were then expelled by a combination of the nobles, and Wulphere, the second son of Penda, was by them raised to the throne of Mercia A. D. 659[25]. From this period, Oswi king of Northumberland seems to have lived in perfect peace with Wulphere king of Mercia during his whole reign; and an uncommon degree of tranquillity prevailed over all the kingdoms of the heptarchy for many years after the death of the furious Penda. This affords us a favourable opportunity of taking a very short view of the most important events which happened in other parts of Britain, from the beginning of the seventh century, to the death of Cenwall king of Wessex, A. D. 672. A. D. 600, to 801.

The history of the Britons of Cornwall, Wales, and Cumbria, is exceedingly obscure in this period. Being under the government of many petty princes or chieftains, they were almost engaged in continual broils and quarrels amongst themselves; which prevented them from giving much disturbance to their common enemies the Saxons. Cadwallon, the cotemporary, enemy, and conqueror, of Edwin king of Northumberland, was by far the most powerful of the British princes of those times; and after his death, which happened A. D. 635, the Britons seem to have been quite dispirited, and to have lost all hopes of recovering their country from the History of Wales.

[25] Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 3. c. 24.

A. D. 600, to 801.

Saxons. They fought indeed ſeveral battles againſt the Saxons after this; particularly one againſt Cenwall king of Weſſex at Bradford upon Avon, A. D. 652; and another againſt the ſame prince at Pen in Somerſetſhire, A. D. 658; but they fought with little ſpirit, and were conſtantly defeated[26].

Hiſtory of Scotland.

Nor is the hiſtory of the Scots much more clear and certain in this period than that of the Britons; and that of the Picts is almoſt quite unknown. This acknowledgment concerning the Scots, will, perhaps, appear ſurpriſing and offenſive to thoſe who peruſe the works of Fordun, Boethius, Buchanan, and other Scots hiſtorians, and there find a regular ſucceſſion of many kings of Scotland in thoſe times, with formal deſcriptions of their characters, and long details of their actions. But as all theſe writers are mere moderns, in compariſon of the times we are now conſidering, and ſeldom condeſcend to quote their authorities, thoſe who do not yield an implicit faith to all their narrations, ought not to be too ſeverely cenſured: and a writer who thinks himſelf obliged to omit ſome of theſe narrations, as at beſt uncertain, will not be greatly blamed by the real friends of truth.

Continued.

Aidan king of Scots dying A. D. 605, was ſucceeded by his eldeſt ſurviving ſon Eoach Buydhe, or Eoach the Yellow, ſo called from

[26] Chron. Saxon. p. 33—39.

the

the colour of his hair[27]. This prince, who is named *Eugenius* by our modern hiſtorians, is ſaid to have been a great favourite of the famous St. Columba, who pointed him out to his father Aidan as his ſucceſſor, at a time when he had three elder ſons living[28]. Some of our later hiſtorians repreſent Eugenius as a peaceful, others as a warlike prince, continually fighting, either againſt the Picts or Saxons: a ſufficient proof that they knew nothing with certainty of his character or actions[29]. The only thing recorded of him with any tolerable evidence is, that he gave a kind reception and hoſpitable entertainment to the ſeven ſons of Ethelfred king of Northumberland, who fled into Scotland with their ſiſter Ebba, and many followers, A. D. 617[30]. A. D. 600, to 801.

In the two ancient catalogues of the kings of Scots, publiſhed by Father Innes, Kinath-Kerr, or Kinath the Left-handed, the ſon of Conal, is placed immediately after Eoach Buydhe, and is ſaid to have reigned three months: though all our modern hiſtorians, for what reaſon I know not, have inverted this order, and placed the ſhort reign of Kenneth before that of Eugenius[31]. However this may be, it is generally agreed, that Ferchar, the eldeſt ſon of Eochod, or Eugenius, aſcended the throne of Scotland A. D. Continued.

27 See Innes's Eſſays, Append. N° 4.
28 Adamnan. Vita Columb. l. 1. c. 8.
29 Fordun, c. 32. Buchan. l. 5.
30 Fordun, c. 33. Bedæ Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 2. c. 12.
31 Fordun, c. 31. Buchan. l. 5.

A.D. 600, to 801.

622; concerning whom Fordun confeſſes he knew nothing; though two more modern hiſtorians pretend to have diſcovered, by what means they do not inform us, that he was a very wicked prince; and that being caſt into priſon by his nobility for his crimes, he there put an end to his own life [32].

Continued.

Dovenald Breach, or Donald the Speckled, ſucceeded his brother Ferchar A. D. 632. He is ſaid to have been a good prince, and to have generouſly aſſiſted the ſons of Ethelfred king of Northumberland, in returning into that country, and recovering their paternal dominions [33]. He was ſucceeded A. D. 646, by his nephew Ferchar Fada, or Ferchar the Long [34]. Though Fordun, the moſt ancient of the Scots hiſtorians, ſeems to have known nothing of the character of this prince, two of his ſucceſſors, Boethius and Buchanan, deſcribe his vices as particularly as if they had been perſonally acquainted with him, and repreſent him as a monſter of impiety, cruelty, and ſenſuality [35]. What credit is due to this repreſentation, let the reader judge. Upon the death of Ferchar, A.D. 664, Maldwin, his couſin, the ſon of Dovenald Breach, mounted the throne. In the ancient catalogues of the kings of Scots, the name of this prince is inſerted immediately after that of his father, and before that of his couſin

32 Boet. l. 9. Buchan. l. 5.
33 Fordun, c. 34.
34 Fordun, c. 37.
35 Boeth. l. 9. Buchan. l. 5.

Ferchar.

Ferchar [36]. But Fordun and his followers have changed this order of succeſſion, without giving any reaſons for the change. Maldwin is repreſented by all our hiſtorians as a wiſe and good prince, who governed his own ſubjects with prudence and juſtice, and maintained peace with all his neighbours [37]. In the fifth year of this king's reign, a moſt dreadful peſtilence raged in all the nations of Europe, except among the Scots and Picts; of which Fordun gives a particular account from Adamnan abbot of Jona, who flouriſhed in thoſe times [38]. Maldwin ended his life and reign A. D. 684. A. D. 600, to 801.

The civil and military hiſtory of the Pictiſh nation (who poſſeſſed the eaſtern and beſt part of Caledonia), from the beginning of the ſeventh century to the death of Maldwin king of Scots, is entirely loſt, except the names of their kings, which may be ſeen in the Appendix. Before we take our leave of the north for ſome time, it may not be improper to take notice, that from the death of Aidan king of Scots A. D. 605, to the death of Maldwin A. D. 684, an uninterrupted peace ſubſiſted between the Scots and Saxons; a thing not very common between two ſuch fierce and warlike neighbours. The reaſons of this long ceſſation of hoſtilities ſeem to have been theſe: The Scots were ſo much weakened and diſpirited by the great loſs which Hiſtory of the Picts, and a long peace between the Saxons and Scots.

36 Innes, Append. No. 4, 5. 37 Fordun, l. 3. c. 40.
38 Fordun, l. 3. c. 40.

A.D. 600, to 801.

they ſuſtained in the fatal battle of Dægſaſtane, A. D. 603, that for a long time they had neither power nor inclination to make any further attempts upon the Saxons; and the Saxons were ſo much employed in mutual quarrels, that they had no leiſure to diſturb the Scots. After the return of the family of Ethelfred from Scotland, A. D. 634, where they had been kindly entertained ſeventeen years, a cordial friendſhip (ſtrengthened by mutual good offices, and cheriſhed by the means of thoſe Scottiſh clergy who converted the Northumbrian Saxons to Chriſtianity) took place between the Scots and Saxons, and continued many years.——But it is now time to return to the ſouth, and purſue the civil and military hiſtory of the Anglo-Saxons from the death of Cenwall king of Weſſex, A. D. 672.

Hiſtory of Weſſex.

Cenwall having died without iſſue, the ſucceſſion to the throne of Weſſex remained for ſome time in an unſettled ſtate. Sexburga, his widow, who was a princeſs of uncommon ſpirit and abilities, kept poſſeſſion of the chief authority to her death, which happened about a year after that of her huſband [39]. After this, the ſucceſſion was diſputed between Eſkwin, a prince of the royal family, and Kentwin, brother to the late king Cenwall, who reigned for about three years over different diſtricts [40]. Wulphere king of Mercia, ſecond ſon of the long redoubted Penda,

39 Chron. Saxon. p. 41. 40 Bedæ Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 4. c. 12.

had

had an engagement with Eſkwin, one of theſe competitors, at Bedwin in Wiltſhire, A. D. 675[41]. Wulphere did not long ſurvive this action, but dying that ſame year, was ſucceeded by his brother Ethelred[42]; and Eſkwin dying the year after, Kentwin, his competitor, became ſole monarch of the Weſt-Saxons[43]. A. D. 600, to 801.

At the acceſſion of Kentwin to the throne of Weſſex, A. D. 676, the three ſmall kingdoms of Suſſex, Eſſex, and Eaſt-Anglia, had fallen into a ſtate of imbecility, and ſubjection to their powerful neighbours, the kings of Mercia and Weſſex. This was occaſioned by diſputes about the ſucceſſion in theſe little ſtates, upon the failure of the male iſſue of their reſpective founders, and by various other accidents. A few years after, the kingdom of Kent, the moſt ancient of the Saxon ſtates in Britain, fell into the ſame condition, from the ſame cauſes. From henceforward, therefore, we ſhall hear very little of theſe ſmall dependent ſtates, as few of the events which happened in them are worthy of a place in hiſtory. Hiſtory of Suſſex, Eſſex, Eaſt-Anglia, and Kent.

We ſhall now purſue the hiſtory of the three more powerful and flouriſhing kingdoms of Weſſex, Mercia, and Northumberland, which were at this time governed by the three following princes; Kentwin, king of Weſſex; Ethelred, the youngeſt ſon of Penda, and brother of Wulphere, king of Mercia; Egfrid, ſon of Hiſtory of Weſſex, Mercia, and Northumberland.

[41] Chron. Saxon. p. 41. [42] Id. ibid. [43] Id. p. 44.

A.D. 600, to 801.

Ofwi, king of Northumberland. Thefe three princes were reftlefs and ambitious, and engaged in almoft conftant wars.

Kentwin king of Weffex employed his arms chiefly againft the Britons of Cornwall and Somerfetfhire, and over-run thofe countries, having penetrated as far as the Briftol channel, A. D. 681 [44]. Ethelred king of Mercia, who began his reign A. D. 675, made his firft efforts againft the little kingdom of Kent, which he laid wafte [45]. After this, he turned his arms againft Egfrid king of Northumberland, from whom he recovered Lincolnfhire, and againft whom he fought a very bloody battle A. D. 679, on the banks of the Trent; in which Elfwin, an amiable young prince, brother to king Egfrid, was flain. A peace was happily brought about between thefe two monarchs, by the mediation of Theodore archbifhop of Canterbury; after which Ethelred fpent the remainder of his long reign in a ftate of tranquillity [46]. But Egfrid the Northumbrian monarch did not imitate his example: for no fooner was the pacification between him and Ethelred concluded, than he turned his arms againft the Scots and Picts. In the firft year of this war, A. D. 684, he gained fome advantages againft the Scots; but the year following, having ventured too far into the enemy's country, he was defeated and flain, and almoft his whole army cut in pieces by the

44 Chron. Saxon. p. 45. 45 Id. p. 44.
46 Bedæ Hift. Eccleſ. l. 4. c. 21.

Picts.

Picts [47]. This defeat was very fatal to the kingdom of Northumberland. The fine country between the frith of Forth and the river Tweed, on the eaſt, was over-run by the Picts; and in the weſt, the Britons of Galloway and Cumberland recovered their liberty and their country; by which the boundaries of the Northumbrian kingdom were very much contracted. The prince who reigned over the Scots when Egfrid invaded them was Eochol Renneval, or the Crooked-noſe, called by our late hiſtorians *Eugenius* IV. who ſucceeded his uncle Maldwin A. D. 684, and died A. D. 687 [48]. The Pictiſh king who defeated and ſlew the Northumbrian monarch was Brude III. who reigned from A. D. 674 to 695 [49]. A. D 600, to 801.

Kentwin king of Weſſex dying A. D. 685, was ſucceeded by Ceodwalla, a prince of the blood-royal, who greatly enlarged his dominions by the entire reduction of the kingdom of Suſſex, and made ſeveral very deſtructive inroads into the kingdom of Kent; in one of which he loſt his brother Mollo, who was ſurrounded, and burnt to death, with all his attendants, by the enraged enemy, A. D. 687 [50]. The year after this tragical event, Ceodwalla being ſeized with remorſe for the cruelties which he had committed in the courſe of his wars, took a journey to Rome, where he died ſoon after his arrival, on April 20, A. D. 689; and was ſucceeded by his couſin Continued.

47 Bedæ Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 4. c. 26.
48 Fordun, l. 3. c. 43.
49 Innes, v. 1. p. 138.
50 Chron. Saxon. p. 45, 46.

Ina,

A.D. 600, to 801.

Ina, who proved one of the beſt and greateſt princes of the age in which he lived [51]. Aldfrid, a natural brother of Egfrid's, had ſucceeded that unhappy prince in the kingdom of Northumberland A. D. 685; but being more addicted to letters than to arms, he contented himſelf with governing his own ſubjects with wiſdom and juſtice, without diſturbing any of his neighbours [52]. Ethelred ſtill continued to reign in Mercia; but had conceived an abhorrence of war, and ſpent the greateſt part of his time in acts of devotion. Theſe circumſtances were favourable to Ina's deſign of enlarging his dominions. With this view, and in order to revenge the cruel death of his relation Mollo, he invaded Kent A. D. 694; but was prevailed upon, by a great ſum of money, to deſiſt from that enterpriſe [53]. He then turned his arms againſt the Britons, and obtained a great victory over Gerwint king of Wales, by which he made an entire conqueſt of Cornwall and Somerſetſhire, and annexed them to his kingdom [54]. While Ina was thus employed, Ethelred king of Mercia, who had lived many years like a monk upon the throne, deſcended from it A. D. 704, and became a monk in reality, leaving his crown to his nephew Cenred [55]. This prince was ſoon after ſeized with the faſhionable frenzy of thoſe times, abandoned his throne, and went to Rome A. D.

51 Chron. Saxon. p. 45, 46. Bedæ Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 5. c. 7.
52 Id. ibid. l. 4. c. 26.
53 Chron. Saxon. p. 48.
54 Hen. Hunt. l. 4.
55 Chron. Saxon.

709,

709, in company with another royal vagabond, Offa king of the East-Saxons; and there they both embraced the monastic life [56]. Aldfrid, the learned king of Northumberland, after a peaceful reign of twenty years, had died at Dryffield in December A. D. 704, and was succeeded by his son Osred, a young prince about eight years of age [57]. The Picts, after the great victory which they obtained over Egfrid, had made several incursions into Northumberland. In one of these, A. D. 699, they defeated and killed one Berht, a Northumbrian nobleman [58]. But they were not so successful in another invasion A. D. 711; for being encountered by Berectfrid, regent of the kingdom in the minority of Osred, they were defeated, and so great a number of them slain, that it in some measure revenged the death of Egfrid and Berht [59]. Ceolred, the son of Ethelred, who succeeded his cousin Cenred in the throne of Mercia, was not of so monkish a disposition as his two predecessors; but being jealous of the increasing power of Ina king of Wessex, he declared war against him. In the course of this war, a very bloody battle was fought A. D. 715, at Wodnesbeorth, in which neither party had any reason to boast of victory, and both suffered so much, that it put an end to all further hostilities [60]. Ceolred did not long

A. D. 600, to 801.

56 Chron. Saxon. p. 50. Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 5. c. 19.
57 Id. ibid. l. 5. c. 18. 58 Chron. Saxon. p. 49.
59 Id. p. 50. Hen. Hunt. l. 4.
60 Id. ibid. Chron. Saxon. p. 51.

A.D. 600, to 801.

ſurvive this battle; but dying A. D. 716, was ſucceeded by Ethelbald, who was next heir to the crown. The ſame year proved fatal to Oſred, the young king of Northumberland, who was then ſlain, though we are not informed in what manner, or by whom [61]. Cenred, a prince of the blood-royal, ſeized the crown; of which he kept poſſeſſion only two years, and was then ſucceeded by Oſric, the ſecond ſon of Aldfrid; who performed nothing memorable; but dying A. D. 726, left his kingdom to Ceolwlf, who was brother to his predeceſſor Cenred, and patron to the venerable hiſtorian Bede [62].

England enjoyed peace for ſome years.

England at this period enjoyed an uncommon degree of tranquillity for ſeveral years. This ſeems to have been owing to the unſettled ſtate of the Northumbrian kingdom; to the libidinous diſpoſition of Ethelbald king of Mercia, which engaged him in other purſuits than thoſe of ambition; and to the great change which age had produced in Ina king of Weſſex, who ſpent the laſt years of his reign in the beneficent works of peace; and at laſt retired to Rome A. D. 728 (with his queen Ethelburga), and there ended his days in a monaſtery [63].—— Here it may not be improper to take a very ſhort view of the chief things which had been lately tranſacted in the other parts of Britain.

Hiſtory of Wales.

The unhappy Britons, who had been deprived of the moſt valuable part of their country by the

61 Bedæ Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 5. c. 24. 62 Id. l. 5. c. 23.
63 W. Malmſ. l. 1. c. 2.

Saxons,

Saxons, ſtill continued to ſuffer new loſſes, and to be confined within narrower and narrower bounds. By the Weſt-Saxon kings, Kentwin and Ina, they were deprived of all the country on the ſouth ſide of the Briſtol channel; and by the Northumbrian princes, thoſe of Cumberland and Galloway were reduced to a ſtate of great ſubjection. From this indeed theſe laſt obtained a temporary relief by the defeat and death of Egfrid, and the misfortunes which thereby came upon the kingdom of Northumberland: but this relief was not of very long duration, as we ſhall preſently obſerve. The moſt powerful prince among the Britons, in the end of the ſeventh and beginning of the eighth century, was named *Gerwint*, the ſame who was defeated by Ina king of Weſſex A. D. 710[64]. After the death of this prince, A. D. 720, Roderic Malwynoc, a deſcendant of the famous Cadwallon, was the moſt conſiderable of the Britiſh princes, and is ſaid (by the Welſh hiſtorians) to have fought many battles, with various ſucceſs, againſt the kings of Weſſex and Mercia, who were his cotemporaries[65]. A. D. 600, to 801.

Eochol Renneval, or Eugenius IV. king of Scots, dying A. D. 687, was ſucceeded by Ewen, or Eugenius V. ſon of Ferchar the Long. On this occaſion the modern Scotch hiſtorians have again departed from the order of ſucceſſion in the moſt ancient catalogues of the kings of Scots, in which Arnchellac, or Armkelleth, is Hiſtory of Scotland.

64 Chron. Saxon. p. 50. 65 Powel's Hiſt. Wales, p. 15.

intro-

A. D. 600, to 801.

introduced before Ewen [66]. However this may be, it is agreed, that theſe two princes reigned from A. D. 687 to A. D. 698, and had ſeveral ſkirmiſhes, but no deciſive battle, with their neighbours the Picts [67]. On the death of his immediate predeceſſor Heatagan, the ſon of Findan, called Eugenius VI. became king of Scots, and put an end to all diſputes with the Picts for ſome time, by marrying Spondana, daughter to their king [68]. Fordun, the moſt ancient of the Scotch hiſtorians, gives an excellent character of this prince; and ſeems to have known nothing of the ſtrange improbable tale, of his having been tried by his nobles for the murder of his queen, which is ſo formally related by more modern writers [69]. Murdoch, the ſon of Armkelleth, ſucceeded his uncle Heatagan A. D. 715, and reigned fifteen years in the moſt profound peace [70].

An univerſal peace in Britain.

The former part of the eighth century appears to have been the moſt peaceful period of the ancient hiſtory of Britain ſince the arrival of the Saxons. At that time the long and violent ſtorms which had agitated all the nations inhabiting this iſland, for ſeveral ages, with very little intermiſſion, ſubſided into an univerſal calm, which is thus deſcribed by the venerable hiſtorian Bede, in the concluſion of his moſt valuable work: "At this time the Picts are in a ſtate of

66 Innes, Append. N° 4, 5. 67 Fordun, l. 3. c. 43, 44.
68 Id. c. 45. 69 Boet. Hiſt. Scot. l. 9. Buchan. Scot. Hiſt. l. 5.
70 Fordun. l. 3. c. 45.

"friend-

A. D. 600, to 801.

" friendſhip with the Engliſh, and of conformity " with the univerſal church in truth and peace. " The Scots too, contented with their own terri- " tories, are forming no plots againſt the Eng- " liſh. Nay, even the Britons themſelves, " though animated with hereditary hatred againſt " the Engliſh, and at variance with the Catholic " church about the time of keeping Eaſter, find- " ing themſelves baffled both in their civil and " religious conteſts, have ſunk into a ſtate of " tranquillity, ſome under their own princes, " and ſome under the dominion of the Engliſh. " This is the preſent ſtate of all the nations of " Britain in this year 731. What will be the " conſequence of this tranquillity, which hath " made ſo many, both of the nobility and com- " mon people, in this kingdom of Northum- " berland, abandon the uſe of arms, and crowd " into monaſteries, time alone can diſcover [71]." With extreme regret, we muſt here take our leave of this venerable hiſtorian, who hath hitherto been our chief companion and guide through the intricate mazes of the Anglo-Saxon hiſtory.——But it is now time to turn our attention towards the ſouth.

Hiſtory of Weſſex, Mercia, and Northumberland.

Ina, king of the Weſt-Saxons, at his departure for Rome, A. D. 729, left his throne and kingdom to Ethelhard, brother to his queen Ethelburga, and a prince of the royal family; who having defeated Oſwald, another prince of the

[71] Bedæ Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 5. c. 23.

blood,

A. D. 600, to 801.

blood, and pretender to the crown, reigned in profound peace to the time of his death A. D. 741 [72]. Ceolwlf king of Northumberland had in the mean time reſigned his crown, and retired into the monaſtery of Lindesfarne, A. D. 737, and was ſucceeded by his couſin Eadbert, the laſt king of the Northumbrians who made any conſiderable figure [73]. He defended the ſouthern frontiers of his kingdom againſt ſome attempts of Ethelbald king of Mercia, with ſpirit and ſucceſs, and reduced the Strath-Cluyd Britons to their former ſubjection [74]. This great prince, after having triumphed over all his enemies, and gained the love and admiration of his ſubjects, was unfortunately ſeized with the epidemic madneſs of thoſe times, reſigned his crown to his ſon Oſulf, and retired into a monaſtery, A. D. 758; where he lived to ſee the ruin which this unwarrantable ſtep brought upon his family and country [75]. Cuthred, who ſucceeded Ethelhard in the throne of Weſſex, had an unquiet reign, being almoſt continually engaged in war, either againſt Ethelbald king of Mercia, or, in conjunction with that prince, againſt the Britons [76]. In the ninth year of his reign, his ſon Cenric, a young prince of great courage, was ſlain in a military tumult. About a year after this great misfortune, he defeated, and generouſly pardoned, Ethelhun, a nobleman of an

72 Chron. Saxon. p. 53. 55.
73 Sim. Dunelm. c. 16.
74 Id. c. 18. Continuatio Bedæ.
75 Sim. Dunelm. c. 18.
76 W. Malmeſ. l. 1. c. 1. Hen. Hunt. l. 4.

ambitious

ambitious and undaunted ſpirit, who had raiſed a rebellion; and it was not long before he reaped the reward of his generoſity. For his great rival Ethelbald, having collected all his forces, in order to decide their quarrel by one great blow, the two monarchs met, at the head of two great armies, A. D. 752, at Burford, where a long and bloody battle was fought, in which Cuthred obtained the victory, chiefly by the prodigies of valour performed by the grateful Ethelhun. This nobleman, after killing great numbers of the Mercian ſoldiers, encountered Ethelbald, and obliged him to fly, in which he was ſoon followed by his whole army [77]. Cuthred did not very long ſurvive this victory, and another which he obtained over the Britons; but dying A. D. 754, was ſucceeded by his couſin Segebert; who by his folly, pride, and cruelty, ſoon forfeited the eſteem, and incurred the hatred of his ſubjects; who, A. D. 755, rebelled againſt him, and drove him from his throne and country. The worthleſs and wretched Segebert, being forſaken by all the world, took ſhelter in the great foreſt of Anderida; where he was diſcovered, and put to death, by a ſwine-herd [78]. Cynewlf, a prince of the royal family, who had headed the inſurrection againſt Segebert, ſucceeded him in the throne of Weſſex [79]. About the ſame time, Ethelbald king of Mercia, after

A. D. 600, to 801.

77 Hen. Hunt. l. 4. 78 Id. ibid. Chron. Saxon. p. 56.
79 Id. ibid.

A. D. 600, to 801.

a long reign of forty-one years, was killed in battle at Seckington in Warwickſhire [80]. Beornred, who ſucceeded him, appears to have been an uſurper, and probably commander of the army which defeated and ſlew him. If this was really the caſe, he had no great reaſon to rejoice in the ſucceſs of his ambitious ſchemes; for before the end of the year 755, he was dethroned, and expelled, by a general inſurrection of the nobility and people of Mercia, under the conduct of Offa, a brave young prince of the royal family, who was by univerſal conſent raiſed to the throne [81].

Continued.

Offa was by far the greateſt and moſt powerful prince that ever filled the throne of Mercia, and raiſed that kingdom to a degree of greatneſs and proſperity, which ſeemed to threaten all the other kingdoms of the heptarchy with ſubjection. His firſt attempt was againſt the kingdom of Northumberland, from which he diſmembered the county of Nottingham, and annexed it to his own dominions [82]. The kings of Kent had for a conſiderable time been in a ſtate of dependence, ſometimes on the kings of Weſſex, and ſometimes on thoſe of Mercia. Offa invaded that little kingdom A. D. 774; and having obtained a great victory at Otford, reduced it to a ſtate of ſubjection to his authority [83]. Cynewlf king of Weſſex obſerving theſe ſucceſſes of his

[80] Chron. Saxon. p. 59. Ingulph. Hiſt. Croy. l. 1.
[81] Id. ibid. W. Malmſ. l. 1. c. 4.
[82] Brompton, p. 776.
[83] Id. ibid. Hen. Hunt. l. 4.

moſt

moſt powerful rival with a jealous eye, raiſed a great army with a deſign to obſtruct his progreſs; but was defeated by Offa at Benſington in Oxfordſhire, A. D. 775 [84]. After this victory, Offa enlarged his dominions on that ſide, by the reduction of the counties of Oxford and Glouceſter, which had long made a part of the kingdom of Weſſex. The Britons ſeem to have taken advantage of this war between the two greateſt of the Anglo-Saxon princes, and made incurſions into both their territories; which brought about a peace between them, and the union of their arms againſt their common enemy. The unhappy Britons, unable to reſiſt two ſuch powerful adverſaries, were every where defeated, and obliged to take ſhelter among the mountains of Wales, abandoning all the low countries to the conquerors [85]. To ſecure his acquiſitions on that ſide, Offa commanded a broad and deep ditch to be made from the mouth of the river Wye on the ſouth, to the river Dee in Flintſhire on the north; of which ſome veſtiges are ſtill viſible [86]. Cynewlf king of Weſſex, after he had reigned twenty-nine years, was ſurpriſed and ſlain, A. D. 784, by Cyneheard, a pretender to his crown, at Merton in Surry, whither he had gone with a few attendants to pay a private viſit to a lady. But Cyneheard (who was brother to the wicked and unfortunate Segebert) did not reap that

A. D. 600, to 801.

[84] Hen. Hunt. l. 4. Chron. Saxon. p. 61.
[85] Hen. Hunt. l. 4. Powel's Hiſt. Wales, p. 19.
[86] Id. ibid. Speed's Chron. p. 344.

A. D. 600, to 801.

advantage from this atchievement which he expected; for the nobility and people of the country having heard of the ſlaughter of their king, flew to arms, and cut him and all his followers in pieces [87]. Upon this Brihtric, a prince of the royal family, mounted the throne of Weſſex; though Egbert, deſcended from Ingeld, brother to king Ina, had a preferable title [88].

History of Northumberland.

The kingdom of Northumberland, which in the reign of Eadbert had been the largeſt and moſt flouriſhing ſtate in Britain, after the retreat of that prince from the world became a ſcene of inceſſant broils, and frequent revolutions, which at length ended in total anarchy and confuſion. Oſulf, the ſon and ſucceſſor of Eadbert, was killed by his own domeſtics July 4, A. D. 759; and Ethelwold, the ſon of Moll, a nobleman who ſeems not to have been related to the royal family, advanced to the throne by the favour of the people [89]. Oſwin, a prince of the blood, attempted to pull him down from this elevation, but was defeated and ſlain at Eldem near Melroſs; though Ethelwold was, not long after, A. D. 765, obliged to reſign his crown in favour of Alchred, the ſon of Oſulf; who was in his turn expelled, A. D. 774, by Ethelred, the ſon of Ethelwold [90]. This uſurper did not long enjoy his precarious dignity, being driven out, A. D. 779, by Elfwold, the brother of Alchred [91].

87 Chron. Saxon. p. 57. 63. 88 W. Malmſ. l. 1. c. 2. l. 2. c. 1.
89 Sim. Dunelm. c. 19. Chron. Saxon. p. 59.
90 Id. p. 60, 61. 91 Id. p. 62. Chron. de Mailroſ. ad A. 778.

The

A. D. 600, to 801.

The juſt title, and many virtues of this prince, could not preſerve him from the fate of his predeceſſors; for he was barbarouſly murdered A. D. 788, by one of his own generals, and ſucceeded by his nephew Ofred, the ſon of Alchred [92]. Ofred had hardly been ſeated one year in this tottering throne, when he was pulled down and thruſt into a monaſtery by the nobility, who recalled Ethelred, who had been expelled about ten years before [93]. Ethelred took every poſſible precaution to preſerve himſelf from a ſecond expulſion. He put to death Eardulf, a powerful nobleman, whoſe deſigns he ſuſpected; and having got the two young princes, Elf and Elfwene, the ſons of the late king Elfwold, into his hands, he murdered them both [94]. Ofred alſo, his predeceſſor, being taken priſoner in an attempt he made to recover his crown, ſhared the ſame fate [95]. Still further to ſecure himſelf againſt all his enemies, he married Elfleda, daughter of Offa, the powerful king of Mercia. But all theſe precautions proved in vain: for he was murdered by his own ſubjects about four years after his reſtoration, A. D. 794 [96]. So long a ſucceſſion of ſudden and ſanguinary revolutions (of which there is hardly a parallel to be found in hiſtory) ſtruck terror into the boldeſt and moſt ambitious hearts, and deterred them from aſpiring to ſuch a dangerous dignity. This

[92] Chron. de Mailroſ. ad An. 788. [93] Id. ad An. 789.
[94] Id. ibid. [95] Id. ibid. [96] Id. ibid.

A. D. 600, to 801.

occaſioned, if we may believe William of Malmſbury, a total diſſolution of government in Northumberland for more than thirty years; which rendered the people of that country unhappy at home, and odious and contemptible among other nations[97]. "Charles the Great (ſays Alcwinus, "in a letter preſerved by Malmſbury) is ſo en- "raged againſt the people of Northumberland, "that he calls them a perfidious and perverſe "people, the murderers of their own princes, "and worſe than Heathens; and if I, who am "a native of that country, had not interceded "for them, he would have done them all the "miſchief in his power[98]."

Wicked action of Offa king of Mercia.

Offa king of Mercia, not contented with all the additions which he had made to his dominions by the force of arms, increaſed them ſtill further, by an act of the moſt horrid treachery and cruelty, towards the concluſion of his reign, A. D. 792. Though the kings of the Eaſt-Angles, who had never been powerful, had long been in a ſtate of dependence on the Mercian monarchs; yet they ſtill continued to enjoy the title, and many of the prerogatives of royalty. Ethelred, who at this time governed that ſmall ſtate, was a young prince of the moſt amiable perſon and character, beloved by his ſubjects, and eſteemed by all the world. By the advice of his council, he made propoſals of marriage to Althrida, daughter of Offa; which were favourably

97 W. Malmſ. l. 1. c. 3.

98 Id. ibid.

vourably received, and he was invited to the court of Mercia to conclude the match. When he arrived there, attended by the chief nobility of his kingdom, he was baſely murdered, and his dominions annexed to thoſe of Mercia[99]. Offa did not long ſurvive this inhuman deed, for which he endeavoured to make ſome atonement by an expenſive journey to Rome, and many liberal donations to the church. He died A. D. 794, and was ſucceeded by his ſon Egfrith; who died in leſs than five months after his father[100]. This made room for Kenwlf, a prince of the royal family, who is greatly celebrated by our monkiſh hiſtorians for his valour and religion. He was the laſt of the kings of Mercia who made any conſiderable figure. For after his death, which happened A. D. 819, that kingdom became a ſcene of almoſt annual revolutions, which ſoon brought on its ruin[101]. A. D. 600, to 801.

Hiſtory of Weſſex.

Brihtric, who became king of Weſſex on the murder of Cynewlf, A. D. 784, being conſcious that his title was diſputable, took every precaution he could think of to ſecure the poſſeſſion of his throne. With this view he married Eadburga, daughter to Offa king of Mercia, who was by far the moſt powerful prince in Britain in thoſe times[102]. With the ſame view, he endeavoured, by various means, to get Egbert, his

99 Chron. Saxon. p. 65. W. Malmſ. l. 1. c. 4.
100 W. Malmſ. l. 1. c. 5. 101 Id. ibid.
102 Chron. Saxon. p. 64.

A. D. 600, to 801.

dangerous competitor, into his hands; which obliged that young prince to abandon his country, and take ſhelter in the court of Charles the Great; by whom he was kindly received and effectually protected. In the court and armies of that renowned prince, Egbert acquired thoſe accompliſhments which laid the foundation of his future greatneſs, and rendered him the greateſt politician and general of the age in which he lived [103]. Brihtric was very unhappy in his marriage with Eadburga, who was wanton, cruel, and perfidious, and ſtuck at nothing to accompliſh the deſtruction of thoſe who had incurred her diſpleaſure. Amongſt others ſhe had conceived an implacable animoſity againſt a young nobleman (who was a favourite of her huſband), and reſolved upon his death. For this purpoſe, ſhe prepared a cup of poiſon; of which Brihtric having inadvertently taſted, loſt his life, at the ſame time, and by the ſame means, with his favourite, A. D. 800 [104]. Upon this event the nobility of Weſſex recalled Egbert from his exile, and placed him, amidſt the joyful acclamations of the people, on the throne of his anceſtors; which he filled with great dignity thirty-ſix years, and became the firſt monarch of the Engliſh nation, by thoſe ſteps which we ſhall trace in the beginning of the next ſection.—In the mean time it may be proper to bring down

[103] W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 1.

[104] R. Hoveden Ann. pars prior.

the

the hiſtory of Wales and North-Britain, from where we left it, to this period. A. D. 600, to 801.

Hiſtory of Wales.

The Britons to the ſouth of the Briſtol channel had been in a kind of ſubjection to the Weſt-Saxon kings, from about the beginning of the eighth century, though their own chieftains ſtill retained ſome degree of authority, till they were reduced to the condition of ſubjects by Egbert. Thoſe who lived between the Briſtol channel and the river Dee were expelled from the low countries, by Offa king of Mercia, and confined to the mountains of Wales; where they were governed by ſeveral petty princes, who according to the cuſtom of thoſe times, were honoured with the title of kings[105]. The moſt conſiderable of theſe princes were Caradoc king of North Wales, and Conan Tendaethwy king of South Wales, who flouriſhed in the eighth century[106]. The Cumbrian and Strathcluyd Britons, who lived along the weſt coaſts, from the river Dee to the frith of Clyde, were in ſubjection to the Northumbrian princes during the flouriſhing ſtate of that kingdom; and upon its decline, they recovered their liberty; which they did not long enjoy, the one half of them being reduced to the ſame ſtate of ſubjection by the Scots and Picts, and the other half by Egbert[107].

Before we leave the ſouth, it may be neceſſary to take notice, that the ſouth and eaſt coaſts of

Firſt appearance of the Danes

[105] Powel's Hiſt. Wales, p. 19, 20.
[106] Id. ibid.
[107] Innes, v. 1. p. 161.

A. D. 600, to 801.

Britain began to be infeſted by new and ſtrange enemies towards the end of the eighth century. Theſe were the Norwegian and Daniſh pirates, who made a very diſtinguiſhed figure in the hiſtory of Europe for more than two centuries. The firſt appearance of theſe ferocious and deſtructive rovers was on the coaſt of Weſſex, A. D. 787, where they murdered one of the king's officers, who went amongſt them without fear or ſuſpicion, to inquire who they were, and whence they came [108]. About ſix years after, another crew of theſe pirates (for as yet they deſerved no other name) landed on the coaſt of Northumberland, killed many of the inhabitants, and plundered the famous monaſtery of Lindesfarne, or Holy-Iſland [109]. The very next year, another fleet of theſe rovers appeared upon the ſame coaſts, and plundered the monaſtery of Weremouth; but a ſtorm ariſing, ſeveral of their ſhips were wrecked, many of themſelves drowned, and a conſiderable number of them taken priſoners, and beheaded on the ſhore, by the country-people [110]. This diſaſter deterred them for ſome time from making any attempts upon the Britiſh coaſts.

on the coaſts of Britain.

Hiſtory of Scotland.

On the death of Murdoch king of Scots, A. D. 730, his ſon Ewen mounted the throne, and reigned three years, according to the two moſt ancient catalogues of the kings of Scotland [111]. But our later hiſtorians change the

[108] Chron. Saxon. p. 64. Hen. Hunt. l. 4. [109] Id. ibid.
[110] Id. ibid. [111] Innes, Append. N° 4, 5.

order of ſucceſſion, and introduce Ethfine, or Eth the White, immediately after Murdoch. They differ too from the catalogues concerning the father of Ethfine, who, according to them, was Heatagan, or Eugene VI. who died A. D. 715; but, according to the catalogues, Eochol Crooked-noſe, or Eugene IV. who died A. D. 687 [112]. But in whatever order theſe two princes reigned, we know very little with certainty of their tranſactions. Fergus, the ſon of Ethfine, mounted the throne of Scotland A. D. 763; but being a profligate and libidinous prince, he was murdered by his queen, in a fit of jealouſy, in the third year of his reign [113]. Oengus king of the Picts, who reigned over that nation from A. D. 730 to A. D. 761, is repreſented, by the anonymous continuator of Bede's hiſtory, to have been a cruel and ſanguinary tyrant, from the beginning to the end of his reign [114]. Selvac, the ſon of Ewen, ſucceeded Fergus II. in the throne of Scotland A. D. 766. What credit is due to the ſtory told by Boethius and Buchanan, concerning a rebellion raiſed againſt this prince by one Donald Bane, who, aſſuming the title of *King of the Iſles*, invaded the continent of Scotland, where he was defeated and ſlain, it is difficult to determine [115]. Selvac dying A. D. 787, was ſucceeded by Eochol, the ſon of Ethfine, who is named *Achaius* by the

A. D. 600, to 801.

[112] Innes, Append. N° 4, 5. Fordun, l. 3. c. 46.
[113] Fordun, l. 3. c. 46. [114] Bedæ Hiſt. Eccleſ. p. 224.
[115] Boet. l. 9. Buchan. l. 5.

later

A. D. 600, to 801.

later Scotch hiſtorians. From the fall of the Roman empire to this period, the Britiſh princes ſeem to have had little or no connection or intercourſe with thoſe on the continent. But Charlemagne king of France having, by his great policy and many victories, revived the Weſtern empire, began to form alliances with foreign princes, and particularly with ſome of the Britiſh kings. That this illuſtrious prince kept up a friendly correſpondence, and entered into a treaty of alliance and commerce, with Offa king of Mercia, we have the moſt undoubted evidence [116]. It is alſo certain, that there ſubſiſted a friendly intercourſe, by letters and meſſengers, between that great prince and the kings of Scots his cotemporaries; but whether that intercourſe amounted to a formal alliance, as ſome French and Scotch hiſtorians have affirmed [117], may be juſtly doubted. Achaius married Ferguſiana, ſiſter to Hungus king of the Picts; by whom he had a ſon, named *Alpine*, who became heir to the Pictiſh crown, on the failure of the male line of that royal family [118]. Though Achaius ſurvived the period of this ſection, it may not be improper to mention his death, which happened in the thirty-ſecond year of his reign, A. D. 819.

116 W. Malmſ. l. 1. c. 4.

117 See Fordun, l. 3. c. 43. Buchan. l. 5. Mezray Hiſt. Franc. l. 9. p. 412. Eginhard Vit. Car. Mag. l. 16. p. 79.

118 Boet. l. 10.

Though

A. D. 600, to 801.

Though the Pictiſh monarchy appears to have been in a flouriſhing ſtate in the latter part of the eighth century, the particulars of its hiſtory which have been preſerved are ſo few, that they cannot be formed into any thing like a continued narration.

SECTION III.

The civil and military hiſtory of Great Britain, from the acceſſion of Egbert, the firſt monarch of England, A. D. 801, *to the acceſſion of Edward the Elder,* A. D. 901.

A. D. 801, to 901.

State of England at the acceſſion of Egbert, and the conqueſts of that prince.

THOUGH Brihtric king of Weſſex died A. D. 800, it was not till the year after that his ſucceſſor Egbert arrived from the continent, and took poſſeſſion of the vacant throne. At that period all the other kingdoms of the Heptarchy were in a dependent or unſettled ſtate. The little kingdom of Suſſex had been ſome time before annexed to Weſſex, and that of the Eaſt-Angles to Mercia; and the petty kings of Kent and Eſſex were tributaries to the Mercian monarchs. The two remaining kingdoms of Mercia and Northumberland, though naturally powerful, were greatly weakened by the unſettled ſtate of their government, and conteſts about the ſucceſſion. Theſe circumſtances afforded Egbert, who was a wiſe and valiant prince, at the head

A. D. 801, to 901.

head of an united people, a very fair proſpect of enlarging his dominions, and extending his authority. This prince, however, ſpent the firſt years of his reign in gaining the affections, by promoting the proſperity of his ſubjects, and in reducing the Britiſh chieftains of Devon and Cornwall to an entire ſubjection to his government [1]. Nor was he at laſt the aggreſſor in thoſe wars which terminated in the reduction of all the kingdoms of the Heptarchy to his obedience. For Bernulf, who had uſurped the throne of Mercia, envying his proſperity, and dreading his power, invaded Weſſex with all his forces, A. D. 823. Egbert meeting this bold invader at Ellendun (now Wilton), defeated him with ſuch prodigious ſlaughter, that the river is ſaid to have been diſcoloured with the blood, and choked up with the carcaſes of the Mercians who fell in that battle [2]. This victory was ſo deciſive, that Egbert met with little further oppoſition in the conqueſt of Mercia and its dependencies. The two tributary kingdoms of Kent and Eſſex ſubmitted, without much reſiſtance, to his ſon Ethelwolf, who marched into thoſe parts at the head of a detachment; and the Eaſt-Angles, throwing off the Mercian yoke, which they had borne for ſome time with great impatience, put themſelves under the protection of Egbert. This revolt of the Eaſt-Angles completed the ruin of the Mercian affairs, as both

[1] Chron. Saxon. p. 69. [2] Id. p. 70. Hen. Hunt. l. 4.

Bernulf,

Bernulf, and his ſucceſſor Ludecan, kings of Mercia, loſt their lives in attempting to reduce them[3]. Wiglaf, who ſucceeded Ludecan, was ſoon obliged to abandon his throne, and conceal himſelf in a cell at Croyland abbey, to prevent his falling into the hands of the conqueror[4]. Upon the retreat of this prince, all oppoſition ceaſed, and Egbert beheld himſelf ſole monarch of all England to the ſouth of the Humber, about four years after the commencement of the war. A.D. 801, to 901.

Though this ſurpriſing ſucceſs probably exceeded the expectations, it did not ſatisfy the ambition of Egbert, who paſſed the Humber with his army, in order to add the kingdom of Northumberland to his other conqueſts. This kingdom was at that time in ſuch an unſettled and diſtracted ſtate, that it was in no condition to reſiſt ſo powerful an invader; and therefore its chief nobility met him at Dore in Yorkſhire, made their ſubmiſſion, and acknowledged him for their ſovereign[5]. Thus was the reduction of all the kingdoms of the Heptarchy under one monarch completed A. D. 827, about three hundred and ſeventy-eight years after the firſt arrival of the Saxons in this iſland[6]. Eſtabliſhment of the Engliſh monarchy.

Egbert poſſeſſed the art of ſecuring, as well as of making conqueſts. That he might not too Wiglaf king of Mercia re-

3 Hen. Hunt. l. 4. 4 Ingulf. Hiſt.
5 Chron. Saxon. p. 71.
6 W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 1. Hen. Hunt. l. 4.

much

A. D. 801, to 901.

much exaſperate the Mercians, who were a numerous and powerful people, by taking from them at once every ſhadow of their former independency, he reſtored their late ſovereign Wiglaf to the title of king; but obliged him to pay tribute, and hold his kingdom of him as his ſuperior lord[7]. This moderation ſeems to have been very pleaſing, both to the Mercians and their prince, as we hear of no attempts they made to ſhake off a yoke which was made ſo eaſy.

ſtored, and made tributary by Egbert.

Egbert's wars with the Welſh and Danes.

Egbert, obſerving his own hereditary kingdom, and all his late acquiſitions, in a ſtate of tranquillity, began to think of new conqueſts. With this view, he marched his army into North Wales, over-ran the whole country as far as Snowdon, and would probably have added it to his other dominions, if he had not been called away to encounter more formidable enemies[8]. Theſe were the Danes; who, after a receſs of more than forty years, began again to infeſt the coaſts of Britain, A. D. 832, when they plundered the iſle of Shepey. The very next year they returned, with no fewer than thirty-five ſhips, and landed at Charmouth in Dorſetſhire; near to which place a battle was fought between them and the Engliſh, with great ſlaughter on both ſides, but without much reaſon to boaſt of victory on either[9]. About

7 Chron. Saxon. p. 72. Ingulf. Hiſt.
8 Chron. Saxon. p. 72. Hen. Hunt. l. 4. 9 Id. ibid.

two

two years after, these teasing plunderers came again with a still greater fleet and army; and landing in Cornwall, prevailed upon the Britons of that country to revolt, and join them. Egbert, not dismayed at this junction, engaged and defeated the combined army of the Danes and Britons, at Hengsdown-hill, with prodigious slaughter. This was the last glorious action of the life of that great prince, and first English monarch, who died A. D. 836 [10].

A. D. 801, to 901.

Egbert was succeeded by his son Ethelwolf; who, in the very first year of his reign, gave the government of Kent, Sussex, and Essex, to his eldest son Athelstan, with the title of king [11]. The unwelcome visits of the Danes now became annual, or even more frequent; and the history of England for several years consists of nothing but dry details of the descents of these destructive rovers on different parts of the coasts, and of their battles with the inhabitants. The most considerable of these battles was that which was fought at Okeley in Surrey, A. D. 851, between Ethelwolf, assisted by his son Ethelbald, and a great army of Danes, who had landed from a fleet of 350 sail, at the mouth of the river Thames, and had taken and plundered the cities of Canterbury and London in their march. In this action, which is said to have been the bloodiest that ever had been fought in England,

Accession and wars of Ethelwolf.

[10] Chron. Saxon. p. 73. [11] Id. ibid.

A. D. 801, to 901.

the Engliſh obtained a great victory [12]. But notwithſtanding this, and two other victories which they obtained that ſame year, one by land at Wanbury in Dorſetſhire, the other by ſea near Sandwich, a party of Danes took poſſeſſion of the iſle of Thanet, where they continued ſeveral years, which was the firſt attempt they made to ſettle in England [13]. The people of North Wales, obſerving how much the Engliſh were haraſſed by the frequent depredations of the Danes, and imagining that this was a favourable opportunity for revenging the injuries which they had received from Egbert, invaded Mercia, A. D. 853, with a very numerous army; which obliged Burthred, the tributary king of that country, to implore the aſſiſtance of Ethelwolf, who was his father-in-law, as well as his ſovereign lord. Upon this Ethelwolf marched an army into Mercia, expelled the Welſh, and purſued them into their own country [14].

Ethelwolf's journey to Rome, return, and death.

This was the laſt military exploit of Ethelwolf; who, the year after, took a journey to Rome, where he ſpent about ten months in the ſuperſtitious devotions of thoſe times, and in acts of liberality to the pope and clergy; which made him a very welcome gueſt, and procured him all the frivolous unexpenſive honours his heart could wiſh; and amongſt others the papal unction of his youngeſt ſon Alfred, who was

[12] Hen. Hunt. l. 5. [13] Id. ibid. Chron. Saxon. p. 76.
[14] Id. ibid.

with

with him in that city[15]. In his return to England, through France, he married the princeſs Judith, daughter to Charles the Bald. On his arrival in his own dominions, he met with a very unexpected difficulty. His eldeſt ſurviving ſon Ethelbald, having his impatient ambition encouraged by ſome evil counſellors, had reſolved to prevent his father's reſuming the reins of government, and had formed a very powerful party to aſſiſt him in executing that reſolution. But this unnatural quarrel was happily terminated without blood, by the moderation of Ethelwolf, who conſented that his ſon ſhould retain the kingdom of Weſſex, and contented himſelf with his other dominions for the remainder of his life, which was only two years[16]. A. D. 801, to 901.

Ethelwolf, at his death, A. D. 857, left four ſons, named *Ethelbald*, *Ethelbert*, *Ethered*, and *Alfred*. By his will he divided his dominions between the two eldeſt, aſſigning the weſtern parts, as moſt honourable, to Ethelbald, and the eaſtern to Ethelbert[17]. The firſt of theſe was a very profligate prince, and gave great ſcandal by marrying his father's widow[18]. At his death, which happened A. D. 860, his brother Ethelbert ſucceeded to his dominions, and thereby became the ſovereign of all England. His reign was alſo ſhort; and during the courſe of it the coaſts were inceſſantly infeſted by the The wars of Ethelbald, Ethelbert, and Ethered.

[15] Aſſerius Vit. Alfredi, p. 2.
[16] Id. ibid. W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 2.
[17] Aſſerius, p. 2.
[18] Id. ibid.

A. D. 801, to 901.

Danes. He was ſucceeded, A. D. 866, by his next brother Ethered; who, though a good prince, and aſſiſted by his heroic brother Alfred, hardly enjoyed one moment's tranquillity during his whole reign. The Danes, no longer contented with making deſultory deſcents upon the coaſts, came over in greater multitudes, under more honourable leaders, penetrated further into the country, and attempted to make conqueſts. A great army of theſe adventurers landed A. D. 866, among the Eaſt-Angles; who, to preſerve themſelves from immediate deſtruction, gave them winter-quarters, and furniſhed them with a great number of horſes in the ſpring [19]. Thus provided, they directed their march northward, paſſed the Humber, and took the city of York. The Northumbrians at this time were engaged in a civil war, between two competitors for the government, Oſbright and Ælla, who had the wiſdom to ſuſpend their hoſtilities, and unite their forces againſt the common enemy; but were both killed in an attempt to recover York [20]. Next year the Daniſh army leaving York, penetrated into Mercia, and ſeized Nottingham, where they wintered. Burthred, the tributary king of Mercia, unable to expel theſe invaders, implored the aſſiſtance of Ethered; who marching, with his brother Alfred, at the head of a great army, inveſted the Danes in Nottingham, and partly by force, and partly

[19] Chron. Saxon. p. 78.

[20] Id. ibid. Aſſer. p. 5.

by

by treaty, obliged them to evacuate that place, and return into the north[21]. Having reſted almoſt a whole year at York, they again left that city A. D. 870, marched through part of Mercia, marking their way with blood and ruin, entered the country of the Eaſt-Angles, and took up their winter-quarters at Thetford[22]. The Eaſt-Angles, finding that all their former ſubmiſſions could not preſerve them from ruin, flew to arms, and being commanded by Edmund, a young prince of diſtinguiſhed piety and virtue, attacked the Danes; but were totally defeated, and their prince taken and put to death[23]. The Danes, encouraged by theſe ſucceſſes, advanced to Reading, which they fortified, and made their head-quarters; and threatened the whole country around with deſtruction. Ethered, in order to deliver his kingdom from thoſe dreadful enemies, who had ſo long preyed upon its vitals, collected all his forces, and ſummoned the Mercians and Northumbrians to join him with theirs. But theſe infatuated nations, taking advantage of his diſtreſs to recover their independency, refuſed to comply with this ſummons; by which they weakened the hands of their ſovereign, and brought ruin upon themſelves[24]. Not diſpirited with this moſt unſeaſonable defection, Ethered marched, at the head of his native ſubjects, to diſlodge the Danes; A. D. 801, to 901.

[21] Aſſer. p. 5. [22] Id. p. 6. [23] Id. ibid.
[24] W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 3.

A. D. 801, to 901.

and in the courſe of one year (871) engaged them in five pitched battles, with various ſucceſs. Being mortally wounded in the laſt of theſe battles, this virtuous but unhappy prince ſoon after ended his life and reign, leaving his ſubjects and ſucceſſor in the moſt dangerous and diſtreſsful circumſtances [25].

Acceſſion of Alfred, and his firſt wars with the Danes.

Alfred, the youngeſt and only ſurviving ſon of Ethelwolf, ſucceeded his brother Ethered A. D. 871, in the twenty-ſecond year of his age. This excellent prince, who is juſtly called the Great, and hath been long eſteemed the pride and glory of the Engliſh nation, began his reign under the greateſt diſadvantages. Many of his cities, towns, and villages, were reduced to aſhes, his beſt provinces almoſt depopulated, his braveſt captains and ſoldiers ſlain in battle, and a powerful army of cruel exulting barbarians, the authors of all theſe calamities, in the very bowels of his country. He was even unſucceſsful in his firſt efforts to deliver his ſubjects from their enemies, being defeated at the battle of Wilton, which was fought within a month after his acceſſion. The Danes, however, having loſt one of their kings, nine of their generals, and prodigious numbers of their men in their late battles, and being no ſtrangers to the courage and conduct of the youthful monarch who oppoſed them, conſented to a peace, and agreed to retire out of the Weſt-Saxon terri-

[25] Aſſer. p. 7.

tories.

tories[26]. In consequence of this agreement, they evacuated Reading, and retired to London, where they spent the winter[27]. Burthred, brother-in-law to Alfred, who then governed Mercia, unable to dislodge these troublesome inmates by force, prevailed upon them by many valuable presents, to leave his country; from whence they marched into the kingdom of the East-Angles, and fixed their head-quarters for some time at Torksey. Having destroyed every thing in these parts, they returned A. D. 874 into Mercia, of which they made an entire conquest, obliging Burthred to abandon his country in despair, and retire to Rome, where he soon after died[28]. This Danish army, which had continued eight years in England, and had traversed and almost ruined the whole country to the north of the Thames and Severn, was now become so numerous, by continual accessions of new adventurers, that it was found inconvenient to remain any longer in one body. It divided therefore at Repton in Derbyshire: one half marching northward under the command of a prince named *Haldane*, took possession of the kingdom of Northumberland, and there began to settle and apply to agriculture A.D. 875; the other half marching southward under the command of Guthrum, Oscitil, and Amund, three chieftains who had lately arrived with many followers, took up their head-quarters at Cam-

A.D. 801, to 901.

[26] Chron. Saxon. p. 82. Asser. p. 8. [27] Id. ibid.
[28] Id. ibid.

A.D. 801, to 901.

bridge [29]. Before the Danes left Mercia, they delegated the command of that country to one Ceolwulf, a weak and diſloyal nobleman, who had abandoned the ſervice of Alfred, and joined the enemies of his country [30]. This was the melancholy poſture of affairs in England in the beginning of the year 876.

Continuation of his wars.

That part of the Daniſh army which had wintered at Cambridge, marching from thence in the night, entered the kingdom of Weſſex, and penetrated as far as Wareham in Dorſetſhire, which they ſurpriſed [31]. Alfred, rouſed by this invaſion from the ſhort repoſe which he had enjoyed ſince the laſt peace with the Danes, and finding himſelf unprepared to meet them in the field, entered into a negotiation with them, which ended in a treaty, by which they engaged, and confirmed their engagements by the moſt ſolemn oaths, to retire a ſecond time out of the territories of the Weſt-Saxons [32]. But theſe faithleſs barbarians violated this treaty almoſt as ſoon as it was made, by ſurpriſing the city of Exeter, with their cavalry, to which their whole army marched A.D. 877 [33]. They met, however, with a very great loſs this year by ſea. Being overtaken by a dreadful ſtorm near Swanwic, as they were bringing their fleet from Wareham to Exeter, no fewer than 120 of their ſhips were wrecked [34]. Alfred being now fully convinced,

[29] Chron. Saxon. p. 82, 83. Aſſer. p. 8. [30] Id. ibid.
[31] Id. ibid. [32] Chron. Saxon. p. 83. Aſſer. p. 8.
[33] Id. ibid. [34] Id. ibid.

that

that nothing could preſerve his country from being conquered but a brave reſiſtance, collected all his forces, with which he inveſted Exeter by land, while a fleet which he had prepared, and manned chiefly with Friſian pirates, blocked up the harbour. This fleet having happily defeated a Daniſh ſquadron, which brought a reinforcement to the beſieged, the Danes in Exeter capitulated, and agreed to evacuate that city, and all the territories of the Weſt-Saxons; which they accordingly did in Auguſt this year, and retired into Mercia, where they ſpent the winter [35]. While they remained in Mercia, they received a great reinforcement of their countrymen; which emboldened them to return once more into the kingdom of Weſſex; and having ſeized Chippenham, which was then a royal city, they over-run the whole country, A. D. 878 [36].

A. D. 801, to 901.

The Weſt-Saxons, who, animated by the example and exhortations of their king, had made ſo noble a ſtand in defence of their country, after all the reſt of England had ſubmitted, were now at laſt diſpirited, thinking it in vain any longer to oppoſe enemies who were neither bound by treaties nor diminiſhed by defeats. Some of them fled into foreign countries, ſome ſubmitted to the conquerors, and ſome concealed themſelves in woods and foreſts; while the brave Alfred was abandoned by all but a few faithful

Alfred's retirement.

35 Aſſer, p. 9. Chron. Saxon. p. 84. 36 Id. ibid.

A.D. 801, to 901.

friends, and his own invincible reſolution [37]. At length, finding it unſafe to retain even theſe few followers about his perſon, he diſmiſſed them, to wait for better times; and putting on the dreſs of a country-clown, concealed himſelf in the cottage of a cow-herd [38]. As every circumſtance relating to ſo great a perſon in ſuch deep diſtreſs appears important and intereſting, the following anecdote hath been preſerved by ſeveral of our ancient hiſtorians; and particularly by Aſſer, who probably heard it from the king's own mouth: That one day, when he was ſitting by the fire in the cottage where he had concealed himſelf, trimming his bow and arrows, he was heartily ſcolded by the good woman of the houſe (who knew not the quality of her gueſt) for neglecting to turn ſome cakes that were toaſting; telling him in great anger, that he would be active enough in eating them, though he would not take the trouble to turn them [39].——Alfred did not continue long in this ignoble diſguiſe; but as ſoon as the heat of the ſearch after him was a little abated, he began to look abroad; and finding a place convenient for his purpoſe, at the confluence of the Thone and Parett in Somerſetſhire, he collected a few of the braveſt of his nobility, and there built a ſmall fort for their reſidence and protection. In this place, which he named *Ethelingey*, or, *The Iſle of Nobles*, he continued about four months, diſtreſſing his

37 Chron. Saxon. p. 84. Aſſer. p. 9. 38 Id. ibid.
39 Id. ibid.

enemies,

enemies, and procuring ſubſiſtence for himſelf and followers by frequent excurſions [40]. A. D. 801, to 901.

While Alfred was thus employed, he received intelligence, that Oddune earl of Devonſhire had defeated a party of the Danes, killed their leader, and taken their magical ſtandard called *Reafan*, or, *The Raven* [41]. Encouraged by this news of the returning ſpirit and ſucceſs of his ſubjects, he reſolved to leave his retreat, and make a vigorous effort for the recovery of his crown. But before he aſſembled his forces, he reſolved to gain an exact knowledge of the ſtrength and poſture of his enemies. With this view, he entered their camp in the diſguiſe of a harper, and diverted them ſo much with his muſic and pleaſantries, that they kept him ſeveral days in their army, introduced him to their general Guthrum, and gave him an opportunity of ſeeing every thing he deſired [42]. Obſerving with pleaſure, that the Danes were entirely off their guard, he diſpatched truſty meſſengers to all the nobility of Somerſetſhire, Wiltſhire, and Hampſhire, commanding them to meet him, with all their followers, on a certain day, at Brixton near Selwood foreſt. Theſe commands were ſo well obeyed, that Alfred, at the time and place appointed, beheld himſelf at the head of a numerous army of his ſubjects, tranſported with joy at the ſight of their beloved king, and determined to die or conquer under his conduct. That he might not give

Alfred leaves his retirement, and defeats the Danes.

[40] Aſſer. p. 9. [41] Id. p. 10. Alurid. Beverlun. l. 7. p. 105.
[42] Ingulf. Hiſt. W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 4.

their

A. D. 801, to 901.

their ardour time to cool, he led them directly towards Eddington, where their enemies were incamped. The Danes were surprised beyond measure at the approach of an English army, with king Alfred at their head; and he, falling upon them with great fury before they had time to recover from their surprise, gained a complete victory [43]. The shattered remains of the Danish army, with their commander Guthrum, took shelter in an old castle near the field of battle, where they were immediately invested by their victorious enemies, who soon compelled them to surrender at discretion [44]. On this occasion Alfred acquired as much honour by his clemency as he had done by his valour. Instead of glutting his revenge with the blood of these prostrate wretches, he formed the benevolent design of making them useful and happy. In order to this, he proposed the following terms: That if they would become Christians, and join with him to prevent the ravages of other Danes, he would spare their lives, take them under his protection, and assign them sufficient territories for their residence. These conditions were joyfully accepted by Guthrum and his followers, who were baptized, and settled in East-Anglia and Northumberland, A. D. 880 [45].

Continuation of the wars between Alfred and the Danes.

From this period Alfred and his subjects enjoyed some repose for several years; which that excellent prince employed in repairing his ruined

43 Chron. Saxon. p. 85. Asser. p. 10. 44 Id. ibid.
45 Chron. Saxon. p. 85, 86. Asser. p. 12.

cities,

cities, building forts in the moſt convenient ſituations for the protection of the coaſts, increaſing his fleet, training his ſubjects to the uſe of arms, and in the execution of many other projects for the ſecurity and improvement of his country [46]. But this repoſe, which had ſeveral times been a little diſturbed by tranſient deſcents, was at laſt deſtroyed by a very formidable invaſion. For the Danes, having all this time been making ſuch deplorable devaſtations in all the provinces of France, that they had reduced themſelves, as well as their enemies, to great diſtreſs and want, reſolved once more to try their fortunes in England, where they arrived A. D. 893, in a fleet of 330 ſhips, under their famous leader Haſtings [47]. The far greateſt part of this mighty armament diſembarked in the ſouth-eaſt corner of Kent, and ſeizing the fort of Apuldore, made it their head-quarters; while eighty ſail, under their chief commander Haſtings, entered the Thames, and landed their men at Milton; where they erected a ſtrong fortification, of which ſome veſtiges are ſtill remaining [48]. Alfred was in Eaſt-Anglia, regulating the affairs of that country and of Northumberland, when he received the news of this formidable invaſion; and before he left theſe parts, he exacted a new oath of allegiance, and a greater number of hoſtages, from the Danes ſettled in theſe two kingdoms [49]. He then directed his march ſouth- A. D. 801, to 901.

[46] Aſſer. p. 12.
[47] Chron. Saxon. p. 90.
[48] Id. p. 92.
[49] Id. ibid.

wards,

A.D. 801, to 901.

wards, collecting his forces as he advanced, and incamped near the centre of Kent, and in the middle between the two Daniſh armies, in order to prevent their junction, and check their excurſions. In this poſture the three armies remained during the greateſt part of the year 894; in which innumerable ſkirmiſhes happened, between the plundering detachments of the Danes, and parties of the king's army ſent out to protect the country [50]. At length the great Daniſh army at Apuldore, having collected a conſiderable booty, abandoned the fortifications at that place, with a deſign to paſs the Thames, and penetrate into Eſſex; but were intercepted by the king on their march, and defeated, near Farnham [51]. About the ſame time, Haſtings, with the army under his command, removed from Milton, and incamped at Beamflete, which he fortified, and where he was afterwards joined by the remains of the other army which had eſcaped from Farnham. When Alfred was preparing to attack the Danes at Beamflete, he received the diſagreeable news, that thoſe of Eaſt-Anglia and Northumberland, forgetting all their oaths and obligations, had revolted, and were beſieging Exeter. Leaving, therefore, ſome troops in London, to protect that city againſt the Danes in Eſſex, he marched with great expedition into the weſt, and came upon the Danes before Exeter ſo unexpectedly, that they raiſed the ſiege with

50 Chron. Saxon. p. 92.

51 Id. ibid.

great

great precipitation, and fled to their ships [52]. In the mean time, the Danes at Beamflete, encouraged by the diſtance of the king, marched out on a plundering expedition; leaving their wives, children, and booty, in their camp, under a ſtrong guard. The Engliſh troops in London having received intelligence of this, and being joined by a party of the citizens, they marched out with great ſecrecy, attacked the Daniſh camp, cut the guard in pieces, and got poſſeſſion of much ſpoil and many priſoners [53]. Among theſe priſoners were the wife and two ſons of Haſtings, the Daniſh king or general [54]. Alfred, as he had done on former occaſions, made a wiſe and moderate uſe of this great advantage. He reſtored to Haſtings his wife and children, on condition of his leaving the kingdom with his followers; which greatly weakened the power of the Danes in England [55]. Thoſe who remained behind, roamed up and down the country about two years, ſometimes united, and ſometimes in ſeparate bodies, inflicting and ſuffering many evils. At length their numbers being greatly diminiſhed, by frequent ſkirmiſhes, and by a dreadful plague which raged in thoſe times, they embarked at different ports of Northumberland, A. D. 897, and returned to the continent [56]. A. D. 801, to 901.

From this time Alfred reigned in great honour and felicity, the dread of his enemies, the dar- Death of Alfred.

52 Chron. Saxon. p. 92. 53 Id. ibid. 54 Id. ibid.
55 M. Weſt. p. 179. 56 Chron. Saxon. p. 96, 97.

A. D. 801, to 901.

ling of his ſubjects, and the delight of mankind; inceſſantly employed in ſtrengthening, enriching, adorning his dominions, and in ſecuring them againſt the return of their enemies, by a powerful fleet. But this happy period was not of long duration: for this excellent prince was carried off by death October 28, A. D. 901, in the fifty-third year of his age, and thirtieth of his reign [57].

HAVING thus deduced the civil and military hiſtory of England, from the beginning of the ninth to the beginning of the tenth century, it may be proper to pauſe a little here, in order to take a ſhort view of the ſimilar tranſactions of the other Britiſh nations in the ſame period.

Hiſtory of Wales.

The Engliſh, during the greateſt part of the ninth century, were ſo much engaged in defending themſelves againſt the frequent invaſions and depredations of the Danes, that they gave but little diſturbance to their ancient enemies the Britons; and theſe laſt were ſtill ſo much divided, and ſo often involved in civil wars, that they could not take advantage of the diſtreſſes of the Engliſh. Conon Tindaethy, who for more than half a century had been the moſt powerful prince in Wales, dying A. D. 817, was ſucceeded by Eſylht, his only daughter, and her huſband Mervyn Vrych; in whoſe time happened the two expeditions of the Engliſh into Wales, which

57 Chron. Saxon. p. 99.

have

have been already mentioned. In the laſt of theſe expeditions, Mervyn was ſlain in battle by the Mercians, A. D. 841, and ſucceeded by his ſon Roderic Mawr, or Roderic the Great[58]. This prince inherited North Wales from his mother, Powis from his father, and obtained the government of South Wales by his marriage with the heireſs of that country; on which account he got the pompous name of *Roderic the Great*. On his death, A. D. 877, his dominions were again divided between his three eldeſt ſons, Anarawd, Cadelh, and Mervyn; of which the firſt got North Wales, the ſecond South Wales, and the third Powis[59]. This diviſion, as uſual, occaſioned very pernicious and laſting diſputes between theſe princes and their poſterity. A.D. 801, to 901.

The hiſtory of North Britain begins to be a little better known, and more important, in the ninth century, than in any former period. This is chiefly owing to the union of the Scotch and Pictiſh kingdoms into one monarchy, which happened in the courſe of that century. It is, however, a little uncertain who was the immediate ſucceſſor of Eochal or Achaius king of Scots, who died A. D. 819. According to the two ancient catalogues publiſhed by Father Innes, he was ſucceeded by a prince named *Dunegal*, who, in one of theſe catalogues, is called the ſon of Eochal, and in the other the ſon of Selvach[60]. But Fordun, and all the modern Hiſtory of the Scots and Picts.

[58] Powel Hiſt. Wales, p. 18. [59] Id. p. 35.
[60] Innes's Eſſays, Append. N° 4, 5.

A.D. 801, to 901.

Scotch hiſtorians, have inſerted a king named *Conval* (concerning whom they do not pretend to know any thing), between Eochal and Dunegal [61]. This Conval, however, ſeems to have been a creature of Fordun's imagination, invented to fill up a blank ſpace, and increaſe the number of kings. Upon the whole, it is moſt probable, that Eochal was ſucceeded by Dunegal. To embelliſh the annals of this prince's reign, ſeveral of the moſt modern hiſtorians have related a very improbable tale, of a rebellion which was raiſed againſt him by prince Alpine, the ſon of Eochal, ſore againſt his inclination, being compelled to it by ſome factious noblemen, who had conſpired to raiſe him, though reluctant, to the throne [62]. Fordun ſays not one word of this ſtrange rebellion. What the ſame authors relate concerning a war carried on by Dunegal againſt the Picts, in favour of his competitor Alpine is no leſs improbable. All that we know, with any certainty, concerning this prince, is, that he died A. D. 831, and was ſucceeded by Alpine the ſon of Eochal [63]. Soon after the acceſſion of this prince, the male line of the Pictiſh royal family becoming extinct, he laid claim to that crown, as being the ſon of Fergusiana, only ſiſter to Hungus late king of Picts, and conſequently neareſt heir by the female line [64]. Though this claim was evidently well founded, it was rejected by the Picts; who, in order to preſerve

61 Fordun, l. 3. c. 53.
62 Boeth. l. 10. Buchan. l. 5.
63 Fordun, l. 5. c. 2.
64 Boeth. l. 10. Buchan. l. 5.

them-

themſelves from falling under the dominion of their ancient enemies, raiſed one Feredeth, a nobleman of their own nation, to the throne. Alpine, at the head of a powerful army of his own ſubjects, marched into Pictavia, to aſſert his right; and was met by the Pictiſh army, near the village of Reſtennot in Angus, where a bloody battle was fought; in which the Picts were defeated, and their king ſlain [65]. Brude, the eldeſt ſon of Feredeth, ſucceeded his father; but was ſoon after murdered by his own ſubjects; and his brother and ſucceſſor, Kenneth, ſhared the ſame fate in leſs than a year. The Picts then made choice of a nobleman named *Brude* to be their king, who revived their ſpirits, and retrieved their affairs, by his conduct and valour. He firſt fell upon the ſtraggling parties of the Scots, who were plundering the country, and by defeating them, reſtored the hopes and courage of his ſubjects. After ſpending ſome time in this irregular kind of war, he collected his whole forces, in order to determine this quarrel by a deciſive action. The two armies met near Dundee, and immediately engaged with the greateſt fury, their hereditary hatred being inflamed by many recent injuries. The battle was very bloody, and victory remained long doubtful; but at length the Scots being thrown into diſorder by the appearance of ſome troops in their rear, fled on all ſides, and were purſued

A. D. 801, to 901.

[65] Buchan. l. 5.

A.D. 801, to 901.

with great slaughter. King Alpine was taken prisoner in the pursuit, beheaded in cold blood at a place called *Pittalpy*; and his head, after being carried through the army on a pole, was set up on the walls of Abernethy, the capital city of the Picts [66]. This unhappy prince, if we may believe the most ancient Scotch historian, was very brave, but exceedingly rash and headstrong, to which he owed his ruin [67].

Continuation of the history of the Scots and Picts.

The Scots were so much dispirited by this great defeat, that Kenneth the son of Alpine, who succeeded his father A. D. 834, could not prevail upon them, for some time, to renew the war, and assist him in prosecuting his claim to the Pictish crown. On the other hand, the Picts were prevented from improving the advantage which they had gained, by a violent dissension which broke out in their army. These circumstances occasioned a suspension of hostilities between the two nations, which continued about two years. At length Kenneth, impatient of this delay, called an assembly of all the nobility of his kingdom, and endeavoured, by many arguments, to persuade them to an immediate declaration of war. But all his arguments were ineffectual; and they still insisted, that some longer time was necessary to recruit their strength and spirits, which had been so much weakened by their late defeat. The king, unwilling to relinquish his design, invited the whole assembly

66 Buchan. l. 5.

67 Fordun, l. 5. c. 2.

to

to an entertainment, which he prolonged till midnight, and then perſuaded them to go to reſt in his great hall, according to the manners of thoſe times. When the whole company were compoſed to reſt, a perſon, inſtructed and prepared by Kenneth, entered the apartment, clothed in the ſkins of dried fiſh, which ſhone in the dark, and, ſpeaking through a trumpet, commanded them to obey their king by declaring war againſt the Picts, and in the name of God promiſed them ſucceſs and victory. Rouſed from their ſleep by theſe tremendous ſounds, and aſtoniſhed at the ſhining figure which they beheld, they haſtened to acquaint the king with the heavenly admonition, and expreſſed the greateſt ardour for the war[68]. The report of this wonderful apparition flew like lightning over the whole kingdom, and excited ſuch impatient keenneſs for war in every boſom, that Kenneth ſoon beheld himſelf at the head of a numerous army of his ſubjects, importuning him to lead them againſt the enemy to fulfil the will of heaven. The Picts were at this time but ill prepared to reſiſt ſo dangerous an invaſion. Their valiant king Brude had died of vexation for not being able to compoſe the diſſenſions of his ſubjects, and purſue his victory; and his brother Druſt, who had ſucceeded him, was neither ſo brave nor ſo well beloved. This prince however, collecting his forces, marched to meet the in- A.D. 801, to 901.

[68] Boeth. l. 10. Fordun, l. 4. c. 3.

A.D. 801, to 901.

vaders of his country: a battle was fought, in which the Scots obtained a complete victory; and animating each other with this cry, "Remember the death of Alpine," they killed prodigious numbers of the Picts in the purſuit[69]. Soon after this victory, all the provinces of the Pictiſh kingdom to the north of the frith of Forth ſubmitted to the conqueror; who, leaving garriſons in the ſtrong places of that country, paſſed the Forth with his army. But he was preſently overtaken by the diſagreeable news, that the Picts had retaken all their caſtles, and put his garriſons to the ſword. This obliged him to march back into the north, where he recovered the fortreſſes, and reduced the country to a more perfect ſubjection. In the mean time the Pictiſh king, having collected a conſiderable army of his ſubjects in the ſouthern and yet unconquered provinces of his kingdom, croſſed the rivers Forth and Tay, and encamped at the village of Scoon, on the northern bank of the laſt of theſe rivers. At this place the laſt great battle between the Picts and Scots was fought, in which the Picts were entirely defeated, their king and chief nobility ſlain, and almoſt their whole army cut in pieces, or drowned in the river Tay in attempting to eſcape[70]. After this great victory, Kenneth met with no more oppoſition from the Picts, but took poſſeſſion of their whole kingdom; which he united to his own

69 Buchan. l. 5. ſub fin.

70 Id. ibid.

domi-

dominions, and thereby became the first monarch of all Scotland, about the year 842 [71]. There is not the least probability in the tragical accounts given by some Scotch historians, of the total extirpation of the Picts; which would have been equally inhuman and imprudent. There might indeed be some unwarrantable cruelties practised by the Scots in the first heat of conquest; but there is sufficient evidence, that the great body of the Pictish nation survived the downfall of their state; and mingling with their conquerors, gradually lost their own name [72]. The victorious Kenneth, after he had reduced the Picts to an entire subjection to his authority, made frequent inroads on the kingdom of Northumberland, and had wars both with the Danes and Cumbrian Britons; but of the particulars of these wars we are not informed [73]. This great prince finished his life and reign, in his palace at Fortaviot, February 13, A. D. 854. A. D. 801, to 901.

Dunvenald, the son of Alpine, succeeded his brother Kenneth; and is represented by Fordun, the most ancient Scotch historian, as a brave and warlike prince, who suppressed some insurrections of the discontented Picts, and cultivated peace with all his neighbours [74]. This character is confirmed by the ancient chronicle published by Father Innes, which acquaints us, that he held a convention of his nobility at Fortaviot, in Dunvenald king of Scots.

[71] See Innes's Essays, vol. 1. p. 140. [72] Id. ibid.
[73] Id. vol. 2. p. 783. [74] Fordun, l. 4. c. 15.

A. D. 801, to 901.

which he revived the good laws of his predeceſſors[75]. But Boethius and Buchanan give a very different character and hiſtory of this prince, repreſenting him as a moſt abandoned profligate and poltroon, who was defeated and taken priſoner by Oſbert and Ella kings of Northumberland, yielded up the beſt part of his kingdom to obtain his liberty, and was caſt into priſon by his own ſubjects; where he put an end to his life by ſelf-murder[76]. This account however, being unſupported by any evidence, and contrary to the teſtimony of more ancient hiſtorians, merits no regard. Dunvenald died in his palace at Belachoir, A. D. 858.

Conſtantine and Eth kings of Scots.

Conſtantine, the eldeſt ſon of Kenneth, the illuſtrious conqueror of the Picts, mounted the throne of Scotland on the death of his uncle Dunvenald. The Danes, who had made ſome occaſional deſcents on the coaſts of Scotland in the two preceding reigns, now invaded it with a more powerful army, which landed in Fife. Conſtantine, falling upon one half of this army, when it was ſeparated from the other by the river Leven, defeated that diviſion. Fluſhed with this victory, he ſoon after paſſed the river, and raſhly aſſaulted the other diviſion of the Danes in their camp, which was ſtrongly fortified. Here he met with a repulſe; and the greateſt part of his army conſiſting of Picts, who were not yet very hearty in the ſervice, they ſhamefully fled,

75 Innes, vol 2. p. 783. 76 Boeth. l. 10. Buchan. l. 6.

leaving

leaving Conſtantine in the hands of the enemy, who beheaded him in a neighbouring cave, A. D. 874[77]. He was ſucceeded by his brother Eth, ſurnamed *The wing-footed* on account of his ſwiftneſs; who reigned little more than one year, being mortally wounded in a battle near Inverury, by his couſin Grig, the ſon of Dunvenald, who claimed the crown as his right[78]. A.D. 801, to 901.

Gregory the Great king of Scots.

Grig Macdunvenal, denominated by the modern Scotch hiſtorians *Gregory the Great*, mounted the throne of Scotland, A. D. 875, and ſpent the firſt years of his reign in regulating the internal police of his kingdom, and conciliating the affections of all his ſubjects. He then reduced the Strath-Cluyd Britons to a more entire obedience to his authority, took poſſeſſion of the town of Berwick, and even reduced ſome part of the kingdom of Northumberland[79]. Having acquired great fame by theſe exploits, he was earneſtly intreated by the friends of Donach king of Dublin to come to the protection of that young prince, who was in danger of being dethroned by ſome ambitious chieftains. In compliance with theſe intreaties, he tranſported an army from Galloway into Ireland, defeated the rebels, took the city of Dublin, eſtabliſhed Donach on the throne of his anceſtors, and then returned home crowned with laurels[80]. This great prince, after a glorious reign of near eighteen years, died A. D. 892.

77 Fordun, l. 4. c. 16. Boeth. l. 10. Buchan. l. 6.
78 Id. ibid. 79 Id. ibid. 80 Id. ibid.

Dun-

A.D. 801, to 901.

Dunvenald king of Scots.

Dunvenald, the ſon of Conſtantine, ſucceeded Gregory the Great, and maintained with ſpirit the acquiſitions of his predeceſſor. Towards the concluſion of his reign, the inhabitants of Roſs and Moray made war againſt each other, with great ferocity and much bloodſhed. The king, marching into theſe parts with an army, reſtored the peace of the country, and put the chief ring-leaders in theſe commotions to death; but did not long ſurvive this event, dying at Forres A. D. 903[81].

SECTION IV.

The civil and military hiſtory of Great Britain, from the acceſſion of Edward the Elder, A. D. 901, *to the death of Edward the Martyr*, A. D. 978.

A.D. 901, to 978.

Acceſſion of Edward the Elder.

EDWARD, the eldeſt ſurviving ſon of Alfred the Great, ſucceeded his illuſtrious father in the throne of England A. D. 901; though not without oppoſition from his couſin Ethelwald, the ſon of Ethelbert, the elder brother of Alfred. Ethered and Alfred had ſucceeded to the crown by virtue of their father's will, and the univerſal conſent of the people, to the excluſion of Ethelwald, who was then an infant; but being now in the prime of life,

[81] Fordun, l. 4. c. 20.

he

he was not disposed to yield so tamely to one of his own age [1]. Having, therefore, collected his partisans, he seized and fortified Winburn: but apprehending that it was not tenable, when Edward with his army had reached Badbury, he made his escape, and retired into Northumberland, and engaged the Danes of that country to espouse his cause [2]. But before they took the field, and declared openly in his favour, Ethelwald made a trip to the continent; where he spent near three years, collecting an army of adventurers of several nations, with which he landed in England A. D. 904 [3]. Soon after his arrival, he was joined by great multitudes of Northumbrian and other Danes, which enabled him to over-run all Mercia, plundering and destroying the country as he advanced: but having rashly engaged in a skirmish against a party of Kentish men, he fell in the action; after which his army disbanded [4]. A. D. 901, to 978.

History of his reign.

Edward being thus delivered from this dangerous rival, spent several years in reducing the Danes of Essex, East-Anglia, and Mercia, to a thorough obedience to his authority, and in building towns and castles in the most convenient places for keeping them in subjection [5]. It was still a more difficult task to reduce the Danes of Northumberland to order and submission, on account of their greater numbers and

[1] Chron. Saxon. p. 100. [2] Id. ibid. [3] Id. ibid.
[4] Hen. Hunt. l. 5. [5] Chron. Saxon. p. 102.

greater

A. D. 901, to 978.

greater distance. To accomplish this, Edward fitted out a fleet of one hundred ships in the ports of Kent, with which he sailed towards Northumberland A. D. 911. The Northumbrian Danes, imagining that his chief force was on board this fleet, instead of staying to defend their own country, marched southwards, in hopes of indemnifying themselves by the spoils of those richer provinces. This artful scheme at first succeeded to their wish: they advanced far into the country, and made a prodigious booty, without meeting with any opposition. But in their return home, they were overtaken at Tetenhall in Staffordshire, by an army of West-Saxons and Mercians, who defeated them, with great slaughter, and recovered all the booty[6]. The Northumbrian Danes were so much weakened by the loss which they sustained in this battle, that they remained tolerably quiet for several years. Edward, however, was kept in continual action during his whole reign, by the frequent invasions of the piratical Danes from abroad, and the no less frequent insurrections of their countrymen settled in England. But this brave prince, by his vigilance and activity, repelled all those invasions, and suppressed all these insurrections, before they had done much mischief. In order to prevent the like dangers and disturbances for the future, he built and fortified an incredible number of forts and towns in all

[6] Chron. Saxon. p. 203.

parts of England[7]. In all these noble toils for the defence and security of his dominions, Edward was greatly assisted by his sister Ethelfleda, widow of Ethered governor of Mercia. This heroic princess (who inherited more of the spirit of the great Alfred than any of his children), despising the humble cares and trifling amusements of her own sex, commanded armies, gained victories, built cities, and performed exploits which would have done honour to the greatest princes[8]. Having governed Mercia eight years after the death of her husband, she died A. D. 920, and Edward took the government of that country into his own hand[9]. After this he not only secured, but extended his dominions, and by a successful expedition into Wales A. D. 922, reduced the three princes of that country to a state of subjection; and the next year he brought the Strath-Cluyd Britons into the same condition[10]. In the midst of these successes, Edward ended his life and reign at Farington in Berkshire A. D. 925. This king was very happy in his family, having left behind him five sons, of which three, viz. Athelstan, Edmund, and Edred, were successively kings of England, and nine daughters, of which four were married to the greatest princes then in Europe[11].

A. D. 901, to 978.

Athelstan, the eldest son of Edward, succeeded him in the throne of England, and was

Accession of Athelstan.

7 Chron. Saxon. p. 103—107. 8 Id. ibid. 9 Id. p. 107.
10 Id. p. 110. 11 W. Malms. l. 2. c. 5.

solemnly

A. D. 901, to 978.

solemnly crowned at Kingston upon Thames, by Athelm archbishop of Canterbury [12]. Historians, both ancient and modern, are much divided in their opinions about this prince's birth, some denying, and others asserting his legitimacy. On the one hand, there is sufficient evidence, that his mother Egwina was a lady of mean birth, which seems to have given occasion to this dispute about the legitimacy of her son; and, on the other hand, it is no less evident, that Athelstan was treated by his grandfather Alfred the Great, and by his father Edward, with every mark of distinction due to a legitimate prince [13]. However this may be, a conspiracy is said to have been formed by a nobleman named *Alfred*, and some others, to take king Athelstan prisoner, put out his eyes, and raise one of his brothers to the throne. This plot was happily discovered, and Alfred brought to his trial: but the proof of his guilt not being clear, he was sent to Rome to declare his innocence by oath before the Pope; which he did accordingly; but soon after died, with such circumstances as, in that superstitious age, were esteemed sufficient indications of his guilt [14].

Makes Sithric king of Northumberland.

Sithric, prince of the Northumbrian Danes, was the only person who enjoyed any shadow of independent authority in England at this time; and Athelstan, in order to attach him firmly to

[12] W. Malms. l. 2. c. 6. [13] See Biograph. Britan. vol. 1. p. 60.
[14] W. Malms. l. 2. c. 6.

his intereſt, upon his renouncing Paganiſm, and embracing Chriſtianity, gave him his own ſiſter Edgetha in marriage[15]. To render him more worthy of this alliance, and of the title of king, he yielded to him the ſovereignty of the whole country from the river Tees to Edinburgh, which ſeems then to have been the northern extremity of the Engliſh territories[16]. But the ſucceſs of this wiſe meaſure was defeated by the death of Sithric, and the ſucceſſion of his two ſons by a former wife, Anlaff and Guthfert, who renounced Chriſtianity, and caſt off all ſubjection to the king of England. Athelſtan, upon this, marched an army into Northumberland, and ſoon obliged the two raſh princes to abandon their country, Anlaff flying into Ireland, and Guthfert to the court of Conſtantine king of Scotland[17]. Ambaſſadors were immediately ſent to Conſtantine to demand Guthfert: but that prince, unwilling to violate the laws of hoſpitality, allowed his gueſt to eſcape; and no leſs unwilling to embroil himſelf with ſo powerful an enemy, propoſed a perſonal interview with Athelſtan; which accordingly took place at Dackers in Cumberland, where all their differences were compromiſed in an amicable manner[18]. A.D. 901, to 978.

This amity was neither cordial nor of long continuance. For Conſtantine, envying the pro- Invades Scotland.

[15] Alured. Bever. l. 8. p. 109.
[16] J. Wallingford, apud Gale, l. 1. p. 540.
[17] W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 6. [18] Id. ibid.

ſperity,

A.D. 901, to 978.

ſperity, and dreading the power of Athelſtan, formed a confederacy againſt him, into which Anlaff, the pretender to Northumberland, Ewen prince of Cumberland, and ſome other petty princes, entered. Athelſtan having received intelligence of this confederacy, invaded Scotland A. D. 934 both by ſea and land, before Conſtantine was prepared for his defence; which obliged that prince to ſue for peace, which he obtained upon making certain ſubmiſſions[19].

The Scots, &c. invade England.

Athelſtan was no ſooner returned into his own dominions, than his enemies renewed their confederacy, and acting with greater caution than they had done before, employed four years in making preparations for a formidable invaſion of England. At length, all things being ready, the allies united their forces, and invaded England A. D. 938, with a very powerful army, compoſed of many different nations. Athelſtan raiſed his forces with great expedition, and came within view of his enemies at a place called *Brunanburgh* by our ancient hiſtorians; the true ſituation of which is not certainly known[20].

Story of Anlaff, one of the confederates.

While the two armies lay near this place, Anlaff practiſed the ſame ſtratagem to gain intelligence, which Alfred the Great had formerly practiſed with ſo much ſucceſs. He entered the Engliſh camp in the diſguiſe of a ſtrolling minſtrel, was introduced to Athelſtan's tent, and

[19] Hoveden Annal. Chron. Saxon. p. 111.

[20] Chron. Saxon. p. 112.

played

played before him and his chief officers at an entertainment; for which he was rewarded with a piece of money at his departure. An abſurd pride would not ſuffer Anlaff to carry off this money; but when he had got at ſome diſtance from the king's tent, and imagined no perſon obſerved him, he depoſited it in the ground. This action was perceived by a ſoldier, who, viewing the pretended harper more narrowly, diſcovered who he was. The ſoldier had formerly ſerved under Anlaff, and from a principle of honour would not betray his old maſter; but as ſoon as he was out of danger, informed Athelſtan of his diſcovery; and at the ſame time humbly adviſed him to remove his tent to a conſiderable diſtance from the place where it then ſtood. The wiſdom of this advice very ſoon appeared. For a biſhop with his retinue arriving in the camp ſoon after, unfortunately pitched his tent where the royal pavilion had ſtood, and the very next night was attacked, and cut in pieces, with all his followers [21]. A. D. 901, to 978.

The noiſe occaſioned by this attack on the Engliſh camp brought on a general engagement between the two armies, which continued from morning to night, with incredible fury and prodigious ſlaughter on both ſides. This battle, which was long diſtinguiſhed by the name of *the great battle*, is deſcribed in very pompous ſtrains by the Saxon Chronicle, and all our ancient Battle of Brunanburgh, and victory of Athelſtan over the confederates.

[21] W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 6.

A. D. 901, to 978.

historians [22]. Without following these writers through their long details, which are not very intelligible, it is enough to say, that victory, which was so bravely disputed, and so long doubtful, declared at last in favour of the English; that no fewer than five of the allied princes, and twelve chieftains, were slain; and that Constantine and Anlaff made their escape with great difficulty [23]. This glorious victory not only reduced all England under the dominion of Athelstan, and obliged the princes of Wales who had been concerned in the late conspiracy to submit to pay a very great additional tribute, but it also raised his reputation so high among foreign nations, that the greatest princes in Europe courted his alliance [24].

Death of Athelstan, and accession of Edmund.

Athelstan did not live long to enjoy this great prosperity, but died at Gloucester A. D. 941; and having never been married, was succeeded in the throne of England by his brother Edmund [25].

Edmund defeats the five burghers.

This prince was in the bloom of youth, being only eighteen years of age when he began his reign. In the time of Alfred the Great, a colony of Danes had been allowed to settle in the five towns of Derby, Nottingham, Leicester, Lincoln, and Stamford, where their posterity still continued under the name of the Five Burghers.

22 Chron. Saxon. p. 112, 113. W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 6. Ethelwerd, c. 5. Ingulf. Brompt. p. 839. Huntin. l. 5, &c. &c.

23 Id. ibid. 24 Ingulf. Hift.

25 Chron. Saxon. p. 114.

A. D. 901, to 978.

Edmund, obſerving that theſe five burghers had been ever ready to favour the inſurrections of their countrymen, thought it imprudent to ſuffer them to continue any longer ſo near the centre of his dominions; and therefore he removed them, A. D. 942, from theſe towns, and ſettled them in other places [26].

Reduces Northumberland and Cumberland.

Anlaff, the famous pretender to the kingdom of Northumberland, who had fled into Ireland after the unfortunate battle of Brunanburgh, hearing of the death of Athelſtan, returned into Britain, accompanied with his couſin Reginald, and attempted to raiſe freſh commotions. But Edmund having marched againſt them before they were prepared, the two princes, with many of their followers, made the moſt humble ſubmiſſions; and at the ſame time declaring their willingneſs to become Chriſtians, their ſubmiſſions were accepted, and Edmund ſtood godfather to them both at their baptiſm [27]. It ſoon appeared, that their profeſſions of ſubmiſſion, and of Chriſtianity, were equally inſincere; which obliged Edmund to march his army a ſecond time into Northumberland, from whence he expelled the two apoſtate princes, and once more reduced that country to his obedience, A. D. 944 [28]. As the Cumbrian and Strath-Cluyd Britons had conſtantly aſſiſted the Northumbrian Danes in all their revolts, Edmund marched his

[26] Chron. Saxon. p. 114. Hen. Hunt. l. 5.
[27] W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 7. [28] Id. ibid. Chron. Saxon. p. 114.

A.D. 901, to 978.

army into their country A. D. 945; and having conquered it, he beſtowed it on Malcolm king of Scotland, on condition of his defending the north of England from the inſurrections and invaſions of the Danes [29].

Death of king Edmund.

Theſe firſt meaſures of Edmund were conducted with ſo much prudence and ſpirit, that the Engliſh had reaſon to hope for a happy and glorious reign. But theſe hopes were blaſted by the immature death of that young prince, which happened in a very extraordinary manner. As he was ſolemnizing the feaſt of St. Auſtin, the apoſtle of the Engliſh, at Pucklechurch in Gloceſterſhire, an audacious robber, named Leolf, had the confidence to enter the hall where the king and his nobles were feaſting. An officer attempted to turn him out; but Leolf making reſiſtance, the king, flushed with liquor, and inflamed with paſſion, ſprung from his ſeat, ſeized him by the hair, and brought him to the ground. The ruffian, reduced to this extremity, drew his dagger, and plunged it into the boſom of his ſovereign, who inſtantly expired [30]. Thus periſhed this hopeful prince, A. D. 948, in the ſeventh year of his reign, and twenty-fourth of his age.

Acceſſion and reign of Edred.

Though Edmund left two infant ſons, Edwi and Edgar, he was ſucceeded by his brother Edred, who mounted the throne without the

29 W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 7. Chron. Saxon. p. 115.
30 W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 7. Hen. Hunt. l. 5.

leaſt

leaſt oppoſition. It was now become a kind of cuſtom for the Northumbrian Danes to revolt at the acceſſion of every new king, to try his ſtrength and ſpirit. On this occaſion they found, that Edred was no leſs alert than his predeceſſors; for appearing in the heart of their country, at the head of an army, before they were ready for reſiſtance, they were obliged to make the moſt humble ſubmiſſions to avert the impending ſtorm[31]. Malcolm king of Scots was alſo induced by the proximity of Edred and his army, to renew his profeſſions of fidelity[32]. Having thus reduced every thing in the north to perfect order and ſubmiſſion, he returned into the ſouth, in hopes of enjoying the bleſſings of a laſting peace. But it was not long before he diſcovered that theſe hopes were not well founded. For the turbulent Northumbrians, impatient of tranquillity, broke out again into rebellion, firſt under the conduct of the famous Anlaff, and afterwards under the command of one of their countrymen named *Erie*. Edred, juſtly incenſed at their turbulence and infidelity, deſolated their country with fire and ſword, diveſted it for ever of the name of a kingdom, appointing one Oſulf, an Engliſhman, to the government of it, A. D. 952, with the title of *Earl*[33]. From this time Edred was no more diſturbed with war; but falling into an infirm ſtate of

A.D. 901, to 978.

[31] Hen. Hunt. l. 5. W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 7. [32] Id. ibid.
[33] Hoveden. Annal. pars prior, p. 243. Hen. Hunt. l. 5.

A.D. 901, to 978.

health, he unfortunately reſigned his conſcience, his treaſures, and his authority, into the hands of St. Dunſtan, by whom they were very much abuſed. After languiſhing ſome time, Edred died in the flower of his youth, A. D. 955[34].

Acceſſion and reign of Edwi.

Edwi, the eldeſt ſon of the late king Edmund, ſucceeded his uncle Edred, and was crowned at Kingſton, by Odo archbiſhop of Canterbury[35]. Nothing can be more melancholy than the ſtory of this unhappy prince. He was hardly ſeventeen years of age when he mounted the throne, remarkably beautiful in his perſon, and not untoward in his diſpoſitions; but a violent paſſion which he contracted for his couſin, the fair Elgiva, became a ſource of many misfortunes to them both. His marriage with that princeſs was oppoſed by Odo archbiſhop of Canterbury, and by the famous St. Dunſtan, the great patron and idol of the monks of thoſe times, on account of their being within the prohibited degrees of kindred. Edwi, deaf to their advice, ſurmounted every obſtacle, and married the object of his affections; which brought upon him the indignation of Odo, Dunſtan, and all their monkiſh followers, who exclaimed againſt this marriage as a moſt horrid and unpardonable crime, and treated both the king and queen with the moſt indecent rudeneſs, breaking in upon their privacies, and tearing them from each others arms[36].

34 Hoveden. Annal. pars prior, p. 243. Hen. Hunt. l. 5.
35 Hoveden. Annal. p. 244. 36 W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 7.

Edwi,

Edwi, enraged at this intolerable insolence, and excited to vengeance by his beloved Elgiva, banished Dunstan out of the kingdom, and expelled the Benedictine monks from several monasteries, restoring them to the secular canons, their original owners [37]. These measures, though just and reasonable, raised the resentment of the irascible monks, and of their mighty patron archbishop Odo, to the greatest height. That brutal bigot, forgetting all the ties of duty and humanity, seized the queen by a strong party of armed men, defaced her beauty with a hot iron, and sent her into Ireland [38]. To put it out of the power of the unhappy Edwi to punish the authors of this most cruel injury, Odo and his monks poisoned the minds of his subjects by their calumnies, and excited the people of Northumberland and Mercia to rebellion, placing his younger brother Edgar, who was then only thirteen years of age, at the head of the insurgents [39]. As Edwi did not expect, so he was not prepared for this event. Edgar, assisted by Dunstan now returned from banishment, soon made himself master of the whole country to the north of the river Thames; of which he was declared sovereign, with the title of *King of Mercia* [40]. To complete the misfortunes of the wretched Edwi, he received intelligence, that his beloved wife Elgiva, having recovered from her wounds, and

A.D. 901, to 978.

37 W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 7.
38 Anglia Sacra, l. 2. p. 84.
39 Id. ibid.
40 R. Hoveden. Annal.

A. D. 901, to 978.

escaped from her keepers, and returned to England, had been intercepted at Gloceſter, as ſhe was haſtening towards him, and put to death, with circumſtances of peculiar cruelty[41]. He did not long ſurvive this unfortunate object of his affections; for having retired to the kingdom of Weſſex, which ſtill continued faithful to his intereſts, he there died of a broken heart, A. D. 959; by which his brother Edgar became ſovereign of all England.

Acceſſion and reign of Edgar the Peaceable.

Though that prince had diſcovered a criminal impatience to aſcend the throne (for which his youth is the beſt excuſe), he filled it with great honour to himſelf and advantage to his ſubjects; by which he obtained the title of *The honour and delight of the Engliſh nation*[42]. He was alſo ſurnamed *Edgar the Peaceable*; an appellation which he acquired, by being always ſo well prepared for war, that neither his own ſubjects, nor other nations, dared to diſturb the tranquillity of his dominions. His attention to maritime affairs was the chief glory of his reign, and his fleet was ſo powerful, and ſo well conducted, that it effectually ſecured the coaſts from all inſults, and procured him much reſpect from neighbouring ſtates and princes[43]. Eight of theſe princes (among whom was Kenneth III. king of Scots) are ſaid to have attended the court of

41 Anglia Sacra, p 84. 42 W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 8.

43 Alured, Beverlien. l. 8. p. 113. Flor. Wigorn. p. 607. Brompt. p. 869.

Edgar

Edgar at Cheſter, and to have rowed him in the royal barge, on the river Dee, as a mark of their ſubjection, according to ſome hiſtorians, or of their regard and friendſhip, according to others. If this event really happened, it was perhaps no more than a frolic, without any ſerious meaning[44]. The magnificence of his court attracted many foreigners, from different parts of the continent, who are ſaid to have imported the vices of their reſpective countries, and corrupted the ſimple manners of the Engliſh[45]. He impoſed a new and very uncommon kind of tribute on the princes of Wales; exacting from them, inſtead of the money and cattle which they paid before, three hundred wolves heads yearly; which occaſioned ſuch a keen purſuit of theſe deſtructive animals, that their numbers were very much diminiſhed in a few years[46]. Edgar is alſo celebrated for his diligence and impartiality in the adminiſtration of juſtice; by which he gave a great check to the too prevailing crimes of theft and robbery[47]. It muſt however be acknowledged, that as this prince owed much of the proſperity of his reign to the powerful ſupport of St. Dunſtan and his monks, who were the idols and oracles of the people, ſo he owes much of his fame with poſterity to the pens of monkiſh hiſtorians. Theſe cloiſtered annaliſts ſet no bounds to their abuſe of thoſe

A. D. 901, to 978.

44 W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 8. Floren. Wigorn, A. D. 973.
45 Floren. Wigorn, A. D. 973. 46 Id. ibid.
47 Id. ibid.

princes

A. D. 901, to 978.

princes who were unfriendly to their order, nor to their panegyrics on thoſe who were their patrons and benefactors. According to them, Edgar was not only a brave, wiſe, and active prince, but alſo a prodigious ſaint: a character to which he had not the leaſt pretenſions, as appears from the accounts of his very criminal amours, preſerved by theſe very hiſtorians [48]. This prince, ſo great in his public, and ſo exceptionable in his private character, died A. D. 975, in the ſeventeenth year of his reign, and thirty-third of his life, leaving two ſons, Edward and Ethelred, who ſucceſſively mounted the throne of England.

Diſpute about the ſucceſſion.

The ſucceſſion was for ſome time diſputed by theſe two young princes, or rather by their reſpective parties. Elfrida, the queen-dowager, had formed a powerful party to ſupport the pretenſions of her ſon Ethelred, who was then only ſeven years of age, in hopes of having the adminiſtration in her own hands during his minority [49]. This party pretended, that Edward was illegitimate, and that his mother had never been regularly married to the late king. But Edward, by his riper age, his father's laſt will, and the popularity of St. Dunſtan, who eſpouſed his intereſt, at length prevailed, and was crowned by that buſtling prelate [50].

[48] W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 8. Hoveden. Brompt. p. 865, &c.
[49] W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 9. [50] R. Hoveden. Annal.

This

A. D. 901, to 978. Acceſſion, reign, and death, of Edward the Martyr.

This young prince (whoſe ſhort reign was one continued ſeries of eccleſiaſtical diſputes) was of too gentle a diſpoſition for that iron age in which he lived. He ſhowed no reſentment againſt thoſe who had oppoſed his ſucceſſion, treated his rival brother with the greateſt kindneſs, and behaved reſpectfully to his ambitious ſtepmother. But all this goodneſs made no impreſſion on the unrelenting heart of that aſpiring woman. Elfrida ſtill meditated the deſtruction of this amiable prince; and it was not long before the unſuſpecting innocence of Edward afforded her an opportunity of executing her deſign; for as he was hunting one day near Corfe caſtle, where ſhe reſided, he rode up to the caſtle, without any attendance, to pay her a paſſing viſit. The treacherous Elfrida received him with great ſeeming kindneſs; and upon his declining to alight, preſented him with a cup of wine; but as he was drinking, he was ſtabbed in the back, either by her own hand, or by her order. Edward, finding himſelf wounded, put ſpurs to his horſe; but fainting through loſs of blood, he fell from the ſaddle, and was dragged along by his foot ſticking in the ſtirrup till he expired [51]. Thus fell this amiable young prince A. D. 979; and though religion was no way concerned in his death, he obtained the name of *Edward the Martyr*, on account of the innocence of his life, and the many miracles which the monks pre-

[51] W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 9.

tended

A.D. 901, to 978.

tended were wrought at his grave [52]. The succeſſion of her ſon Ethelred protected the cruel Elfrida from all puniſhment for this horrid deed; but though ſhe lived many years after, building monaſteries, performing penances, and practiſing all the tricks of ſuperſtition, ſhe never could recover either the peace of her own mind or the good opinion of the world [53].

BEFORE we proceed to give an account of the civil and military tranſactions of the long and calamitous reign of Ethelred, it may be proper to bring down the hiſtory of the other nations of Britain, from the beginning of the tenth century, to this period.

Hiſtory of Wales.

In the beginning of the tenth century, Anarawd, the eldeſt ſon of Roderic the Great, was prince of North Wales, and Cadelh, his ſecond ſon, prince of South Wales and Poweſland. Cadelh dying A. D. 907, was ſucceeded in his principality by his eldeſt ſon Howel Dha, or Howel the Good, the famous legiſlator of the Welſh; and about ſix years after, Anarawd, at his death, was ſucceeded in his principality of North Wales by his eldeſt ſon Edwal Voel [54]. But though theſe two princes poſſeſſed the chief authority in Wales, yet each of them had ſeveral brothers, to whom appanages were allotted, and who were a kind of petty ſovereigns in their re-

52 W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 9.

53 Id. ibid.

54 Powel, Hiſt. Wales, p. 44, 45.

ſpective

ſpective diſtricts. This was the occaſion of many wars in Wales, and of much confuſion in its hiſtory. Edwal Voel, the chief prince of North Wales, was ſlain in a battle by ſome Daniſh pirates, A. D. 939: and though he left no fewer than ſix ſons, yet his couſin Howel Dha was ſo famous for his wiſdom, juſtice, and other virtues, that he obtained the dominion of all Wales, and retained it to his death, which happened A. D. 948 [55]. A. D. 901, to 978.

It muſt be confeſſed, that we have no very diſtinct account in hiſtory of the preciſe time when the princes of Wales became tributaries to the kings of England. It is, however, ſufficiently evident, that they were ſo in the former part of the tenth century. For by the laws of Howel Dha, the king of Aberfraw, or the chief king of Wales, is appointed to pay a fine of ſixty-three pounds of ſilver to the king of London, when he receives his kingdom from his hand, and a certain number of dogs, hawks, and horſes, annually [56]. Some Engliſh hiſtorians affirm indeed, that Athelſtan, who was cotemporary with Howel Dha, impoſed on the prince of North Wales an annual tribute of twenty pounds of gold, three hundred pounds of ſilver, twenty-five thouſand oxen, and an indefinite number of dogs and hawks [57]. But this is quite incredible; and the ancient laws of Wales, which have been The Welſh tributaries to the Engliſh.

55 Powel, Hiſt. Wales, p. 44, 45.

56 Leges Hoeli Dha, p. 199.

57 W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 6.

A.D. 901, to 978.

admirably well preſerved, are much better authorities than the teſtimony of any private hiſtorian [58].

History of Wales continued.

The death of Howel Dha was much and juſtly lamented by the Welſh, as they were thereby diſunited, and involved in civil wars. South Wales was divided between Owen, Run, Roderic, and Edwin, the four ſons of Howel Dha, and North Wales between Jevaf and Jago, two of the ſons of Edwal Voel; and a war was carried on between theſe near relations, with no little animoſity, for ſeveral years. In the courſe of this war, the ſons of Howel Dha were ſeveral times defeated, and the two brothers Jevaf and Jago obtained the ſovereignty of all Wales: but ſoon after, quarrelling between themſelves, Jevaf was taken and impriſoned by Jago A. D. 967. Some years after, Howel, the ſon of Jevaf, collected a great number of followers, defeated and expelled his uncle Jago, and delivered his father from priſon; but did not reſtore him to his authority. While the princes of North Wales were engaged in theſe unnatural quarrels, Eneon, the ſon of Owen the eldeſt ſon of Howel Dha, recovered the dominion of South Wales. The Welſh, in this period, were not only much afflicted by theſe inceſſant broils among their own princes, but frequently plundered by the piratical Danes, and often invaded by their more powerful neighbours the Engliſh; which rendered

[58] W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 6.

their

their condition, in ſpite of all their native valour, very unhappy [59].

A. D. 901, to 978.

Hiſtory of Scotland, reign of Conſtantine.

Conſtantine, the ſon of Eth, and grandſon of the illuſtrious Kenneth, conqueror of the Picts, mounted the throne of Scotland in the third year of the tenth century, and reigned about thirty-five years. He was cotemporary with the two great kings of England, Edward the Elder, and Athelſtan; with whom he had ſeveral wars; but the circumſtances of theſe wars are ſo differently related by the Scotch and Engliſh hiſtorians, that it is very difficult to diſcover the truth with certainty. The moſt probable account of theſe wars hath been already given in the hiſtory of Athelſtan. It is further probable, or rather certain, that Conſtantine had been obliged to relinquiſh to Athelſtan the ſovereignty of the low countries, between the rivers Tweed and Forth, which had been chiefly inhabited by Saxons for ſeveral centuries, though they had ſometimes been under the dominion of the Picts and Scots [60]. Conſtantine ſeems alſo to have interfered conſiderably in the affairs of Ireland; but the particulars of theſe tranſactions are not diſtinctly known [61]. We have very different accounts of the time and manner of this prince's death; ſome hiſtorians affirming, that he fell in the fatal battle of Brunanburgh, A. D. 938; while others aſſert, on better authority, that he

59 Powel, Hiſt. p. 58—67.

60 Ethelred, p. 357. Brompt. p. 838. Fordun, l. 4. c. 23.

61 Innes's Eſſays, vol. 2. p. 786.

made

A.D. 901, to 978.

made his escape from that battle; and that he soon after resigned his crown, and retired into the monastery of the Culdees at St. Andrew's, where he spent the five last years of his life[62].

Malcolm I.

Upon the resignation of Constantine, Mael, the son of Dunvenald, called by historians *Malcolm* I. became king of Scotland; and finding his country much exhausted by the late wars, wisely resolved to cultivate peace with all his neighbours. Edmund king of England having suppressed a rebellion of the Danes of Northumberland A. D. 944, and subdued the Cumbrian Britons the year after, gave the government of their country to Malcolm, to engage him in an alliance against the Danes, their common enemies[63]. Malcolm, some years after, with the consent of Edred king of England, transferred this government to Indulf, his presumptive successor; and from thenceforward Cumberland became a kind of appanage to the apparent heirs of the kings of Scotland[64]. This good king was murdered by a gang of robbers, at Ulrine in Moray, A. D. 952.

Indulf.

Indulf prince of Cumberland, son of the late king Constantine, succeeded Malcolm I. in the throne of Scotland, and bestowed his principality on Duff, the son of Malcolm. Indulf continued faithful to his engagements with the English

62 W. Malms. l. 2. c. 6. Ingulf. Hist. Innes's Essays, vol. 2. p. 786. Fordun, l. 4. c. 23.

63 W. Malms. l. 2. c. 7. Fordun, l. 4. c. 25. 64 Id. ibid.

against

againſt the Danes; which gained him the favour of the firſt, and drew upon him the indignation of the laſt of theſe nations. From one of the kings of England, his cotemporaries (which were Edred, Edwi, and Edgar), he obtained a voluntary ceſſion of the caſtle and town of Edinburgh, with the fine country between the Tweed and Forth; which from thenceforward was conſidered as a part of the kingdom of Scotland [65]. The Danes, enraged at this good agreement between the Britiſh monarchs, appeared with a great fleet and army on the coaſt of Scotland; and after having in vain attempted to land in ſeveral places, put out to ſea, as if they had deſigned to abandon the enterpriſe; but returning ſuddenly, they landed without oppoſition near Cullen, in the country of Boyn. Indulf haſtened thither with his army, engaged and defeated the Danes; but was unfortunately killed in the purſuit, A. D. 961 [66]. A. D. 901, to 978.

Duff prince of Cumberland then became king of Scotland, and ceded (as was now become the cuſtom) his principality to Culen, the ſon of Indulf. Nothing can more clearly demonſtrate the want of authentic materials to fill up the hiſtory of Scotland at this period, than the ridiculous tales of witchcrafts and prodigies which Boece and Buchanan relate in the life of this king [67]. The truth is, we know no more of him Duff.

65 Innes's Eſſays, vol. 2. p. 787.
66 Fordun, l. 4. c. 25.
67 Boeth. l. 11. Buchan. l. 6.

A. D. 901, to 978.

but this, that he was very active in his endeavours to ſuppreſs the bands of robbers with which his kingdom was infeſted; and that he was ſurpriſed and ſlain by ſome of thoſe lawleſs miſcreants, near the town of Forres, in the fifth year of his reign, A. D. 965[68].

Culen.

Culen ſucceeded Duff; and is repreſented by all our hiſtorians as a libidinous and profligate prince, who was murdered by Eadhard thane of Methwen, for having violated the chaſtity of his daughter, A. D. 970[69].

Kenneth II.

Kenneth II. ſon of Malcolm I. and brother of the late king Duff, ſucceeded Culen, and by his wiſe and vigorous adminiſtration rectified the diſorders which had prevailed in the reign of his profligate predeceſſor. The Danes, who in this period brought ſo many calamities on England, did not leave Scotland undiſturbed. For a great army of that nation landed near Montroſe, plundered the open country, and beſieged the town of Perth. Kenneth having collected an army of his ſubjects at Stirling, marched to raiſe the ſiege. This brought on a battle between the two armies, at Loncarty near Perth; in which the Scots were in great danger of being defeated, and had already begun to fly; when they were prevailed upon by the threats, reproaches, and example of a huſbandman, named *Hay*, and his two ſons, to return and renew the fight; by which they obtained a complete victory. The king, by the

[68] Fordun, l. 4. c. 26.

[69] Id. c. 27.

advice

advice of his nobles, rewarded Hay and his ſons (from whom the very ancient and noble family of Errol is ſaid to be deſcended) with a large tract of land in the fertile plains of Gowrie [70]. It is, however, a little ſurpriſing, that Fordun, the moſt ancient Scotch hiſtorian, makes no mention of this Daniſh invaſion, nor of this famous battle of Loncarty. This prince is ſaid to have obtained a formal ceſſion of the country on the north of the Tweed, inhabited by the Engliſh, on condition that he allowed the people of that country to uſe the Engliſh laws and ſpeak the Engliſh language [71]. Kenneth was cut off by a conſpiracy in the twenty-fourth year of his reign, A. D. 994, though the manner and circumſtances of his death are not well known [72].

A. D 901, to 978.

70 Boeth. Hiſt. l. 11. Buchan. l. 6.

71 J. Wallingford, apud Gale, l. 1. p. 545.

72 Fordun, l. 4. c. 33.

SECTION V.

The civil and military hiſtory of Great Britain, from the acceſſion of Ethelred the Unready, A. D. 978, *to the landing of William duke of Normandy,* A. D. 1066.

A. D. 978, to 1066.

Acceſſion of Ethelred the Unready.

THE reign of Ethelred, ſurnamed *the Unready*, who ſucceeded his brother Edward the Martyr A. D. 978, was one of the moſt calamitous in the Engliſh hiſtory. Theſe calamities, we are aſſured by ſeveral monkiſh hiſtorians, were foretold by their favourite St. Dunſtan, at the baptiſm of this prince, and diſcovered in a very extraordinary manner [1].

Deſcents of the Danes on the coaſts of England.

The piratical Danes, who for more than half a century had given the Engliſh very little diſturbance, began again to caſt their rapacious eyes on this country ſoon after the acceſſion of this unfortunate king. Their firſt attempts ſeem to have been made with diffidence, by a ſmall number of adventurers. In the year 981, a few of theſe rovers plundered Southampton; and putting their booty on board their fleet, conſiſting of ſeven ſhips, departed with precipitation [2]. By degrees, theſe deſcents upon the Engliſh

1 Minxit namque cum baptizaretur in ſacro fonte. Unde vir Domini exterminium Anglorum in tempore ejus futurum prædixit. Hen. Hunt. l. 4. W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 10.

2 Chron. Saxon. p. 125.

coaſts

coasts became more frequent and more formidable. In the year 991 an English army was defeated near Maldon, and their commander duke Brithnot slain, by a party of these plunderers [3]. Ethelred, instead of revenging this affront, followed the cowardly and imprudent advice of Siricius archbishop of Canterbury, and gave the victorious Danes a bribe of 10,000*l.* to depart [4]. This measure was productive of consequences which might easily have been foreseen. Another fleet of Danes appeared upon the English coasts the very next year, and put into different ports, in hopes of being bought off in the same manner. Ethelred, on this occasion, called an assembly of all the great men, both of the clergy and laity; in which it was resolved to collect as great a fleet as possible at London, in order to block up the Danish fleet in some harbour. But the success of these wise and vigorous counsels was prevented by the treachery of Ealfric duke of Mercia, one of the commanders of the English fleet, who warned the Danes of their danger; which gave them an opportunity to escape, with the loss of only one ship [5]. Ealfric carried his treachery still further, and deserted to the Danes, when the English fleet pursued and engaged them, which prevented their destruction. A.D. 978, to 1066.

Hitherto the Danish depredations had been conducted only by adventurous chieftains; but Swein king of Denmark, and

3 Chron. Saxon. p. 126. W. Malms. l. 2. c. 10.

4 Id. ibid.

5 Chron. Saxon. p. 127.

A. D. 978, to 1066.

Olave king of Norway, invade England.

in the year 993 England was invaded by a royal fleet and army, commanded by two kings in perſon, Swein king of Denmark, and Olave king of Norway. Theſe princes ſailed up the Humber, landed their men, and plundered Lindſay; after which they marched into Northumberland; where the people and nobility, being for the moſt part of Daniſh blood, made very little reſiſtance[6]. Having wintered in that country, they embarked in the ſpring, entered the river Thames, and inveſted London, in hopes of haſtening the conqueſt of the kingdom, by the reduction of the capital. But being repulſed in all their aſſaults by the undaunted citizens, they were obliged to raiſe the ſiege, and in revenge waſted all the open country with fire and ſword. Ethelred could think of no better method of putting a ſtop to their depredations, than by offering them the ſum of 16,000 *l.* to deſiſt, and depart the kingdom: which theſe royal ravagers thought proper to accept; and having ſpent the winter quietly at Southampton, returned to their reſpective dominions in the ſpring A. D. 995[7].

Deſcents of the Danes.

The calm occaſioned by the departure of the two kings was of very ſhort duration. For in the years 997 and 998, armies of Danes landed, and made dreadful devaſtations in the ſouth-weſt of England, defeating all the detached parties of the Engliſh which attempted to oppoſe them[8].

6 Chron. Saxon. p. 127.

7 Id. p. 128. Hen. Hunt. l. 5. p. 205.

8 Chron. Saxon. p. 129.

In

A. D. 978, to 1066.

In the year 999 these destructive ravagers changed the scene of action, and sailing up the Thames and Medway, defeated an army of Kentishmen near Rochester, and desolated the adjacent country [9]. Ethelred collected a fleet and raised an army this year; but they were both so ill conducted, that they served only to exhaust his treasures and oppress his subjects; which obliged him to have recourse again to the wretched expedient of bribing his enemies, who would accept of no less than 24,000*l* [10].

Marriage of Ethelred and Emma, and massacre of the Danes in England.

In order to gain the friendship of a nation from whose enmity he and his subjects had sustained so many injuries, Ethelred, being now a widower, demanded in marriage the beautiful Emma, sister to Richard II. duke of Normandy, of Danish blood; and that princess arriving in England A. D. 1002, the marriage was consummated [11]. This measure might perhaps have been productive of salutary consequences, if another of a contrary tendency had not been soon after adopted. This was the massacre of the Danes settled in England, who are said to have been butchered by the enraged English, on Sunday November 13, A. D. 1002, without distinction of rank, age, or sex. Among other persons of distinction who were murdered on this fatal day, was Gunilda, sister to Swein king of Denmark, with her husband and children [12]. Some young

9 Chron. Saxon. p. 130. 10 Id. ibid. R. Hoveden. pars prior.
11 Hen. Hunt. l. 6.
12 Chron. Saxon. p. 133. W. Malms. l. 2. c. 10. Hen. Hunt. l. 6.

A. D. 978, to 1066.

Danes found means to eſcape from the general ſlaughter of their countrymen in London, and carried the diſmal news to their ſovereign in his own dominions [13]. It is eaſy to imagine what a ſtorm of rage theſe tidings raiſed in the boſom of that ferocious prince; which made him pour forth the moſt direful denunciations of vengeance againſt the Engliſh, and employ the greateſt diligence to carry theſe denunciations into execution. Accordingly, in the ſpring of A. D. 1003, Swein landed in the ſouth-weſt of England with a powerful army, took the city of Exeter, and ſpread deſolation far and near [14].

War between Swein king of Denmark and the Engliſh.

The Engliſh, ſenſible that they could expect no mercy from their fierce enraged enemies, prepared to make a vigorous defence. But the command of the army being imprudently given to Ealfric duke of Mercia, that hoary traitor once more betrayed his truſt; and feigning himſelf ſick when the two armies were on the point of engaging, the Engliſh were ſo diſpirited, that they diſbanded without fighting [15]. Ealfric dying ſoon after, was ſucceeded both in the government of Mercia and the command of the Engliſh army by a ſtill greater traitor. This was the infamous Ædric Streon, who had been raiſed by Ethelred from an inferior ſtation to the higheſt honours of the ſtate, and married to his own ſiſter [16]. This monſter of villany and ingratitude

[13] Ypod Newſt. p. 427.
[14] Chron. Saxon. p. 133.
[15] Id. ibid. Hen. Hunt. l. 6.
[16] W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 10.

diſco-

discovered all the counsels of his sovereign to the enemy, and, by one means or other, disappointed every scheme that was formed for the defence of his country [17]. A. D. 978, to 1066.

Miseries of the English.

It would be tedious and unpleasant to give a minute detail of all the ravages of the Danes, and miseries of the English, in this calamitous period, who for ten successive years were pursued by a continued series of disgraces and disasters. Exeter, Norwich, Oxford, Cambridge, Canterbury, and many other cities, towns, and villages, were reduced to ashes, and the greatest part of their inhabitants buried in their ruins. St. Alphage, archbishop of Canterbury, with almost all his clergy, were murdered in cold blood. The open country was so insecure that agriculture was neglected, and a famine, no less destructive than the sword, ensued. All the fleets and armies that the wretched English raised for their own defence, were, by various stratagems, betrayed and ruined by the infamous Ædric and his accomplices. If they sometimes purchased a momentary quiet by large sums of money, this served only to accelerate their ruin, by weakening themselves and strengthening their enemies. In a word, Ethelred, despairing of being able to preserve his crown any longer, having sent his queen and two sons before him, retired into Normandy A. D. 1013; and about the end of that year the city of London opened her gates

[17] W. Malms. l. 2. c. 10.

to

A. D. 978, to 1066.

to the victorious Dane, when it might be said that England was completely conquered [18].

Death of Swein king of Denmark, and its consequences.

Swein, king of Denmark, did not live long to enjoy this important conquest, but dying suddenly at Gainsborough, February 3, A. D. 1014, before he was crowned, he is not commonly reckoned among the kings of England [19]. This event revived the dejected spirits of the English, and inspired them with the resolution of attempting to deliver their country from the Danish yoke. In order to this, they sent a deputation into Normandy to invite king Ethelred to return into England, and resume the reins of government, promising him their most cheerful obedience and hearty support. The king complied with this invitation; and having sent his son prince Edward before him, to assure the nobility and people that he would avoid all the errors of his former administration, arrived in the time of Lent, and found a numerous army of his English subjects ready to receive and obey his orders. Ethelred at his first arrival acted with uncommon spirit; and falling upon the Danes unexpectedly as they were plundering the country about Gainsborough, killed great numbers of them, and obliged the rest, with their young king Canute, to retire to their ships, and put to sea. Canute, enraged at this defection of the English, having cruelly mutilated their hostages, and set them

18 Chron. Saxon. p. 133—144. W. Malmsf. l. 2. c. 10. p. 39.
19 W. Malmsf. l. 2. c. 10. p. 40. Chron. Saxon. p. 144.

on

on ſhore at Sandwich, ſailed away to take poſſeſſion of his native kingdom [20]. A. D. 978, to 1006.

King Ethelred did not continue long to act in this commendable manner; but falling again under the influence of his brother-in-law, the infamous Ædric Streon, he was by him miſguided, betrayed, and ruined. That horrid traitor, at an aſſembly of the nobility which met this year at Oxford, invited two of the moſt wealthy and potent earls, Sugfert and Morcar, to an entertainment, where they were cruelly murdered; and their attendants, after making an attempt to revenge their lords, took ſhelter in a church, where they were burnt to death. It ſoon appeared, that Ethelred was privy and conſenting to all theſe baſe and barbarous proceedings, by confiſcating the eſtates of theſe unhappy noblemen, and thruſting the young and beautiful widow of earl Sugfert into a monaſtery. That lady having, at a caſual interview, captivated the heart of prince Edmund, the king's eldeſt ſon, he releaſed her from her confinement, and married her without his father's conſent [21]. By theſe events, the peace of the royal family, and the confidence of the nobility in their king, and in one another, were deſtroyed, at a time when nothing but the moſt cordial union could have preſerved them all from ruin.

Miſconduct of King Ethelred, and treachery of Ædric Streon.

Canute, king of Denmark, having ſettled the affairs of his hereditary dominions, returned about

War between Canute king

[20] Chron. Saxon. p. 145. W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 10.
[21] Chron. Saxon. p. 146.

this

A.D. 978, to 1066. of Denmark and the Engliſh.

this time to aſſert his claim to the crown of England, and preſently over-run Dorſetſhire, Wiltſhire, and Somerſetſhire. King Ethelred being then ſick, his brother-in-law Ædric raiſed one army in Mercia, and his ſon prince Edmund another in the north: but when theſe two armies joined, the prince received intelligence, that the faithleſs Ædric had formed a plot againſt his liberty and life; which obliged him to retire with his forces without fighting the common enemy. Soon after this the traitor Ædric threw off the maſk, and openly joined Canute with forty ſhips of the Engliſh navy, whoſe crews he had corrupted. Canute, ſtrengthened by this acceſſion, advanced into Warwickſhire, having brought all the country behind him to ſubmit to his authority. In the mean time, prince Edmund advanced with a body of troops which he had haſtily collected; but when they found that they were not to be joined by the Londoners, who ſtaid at home to defend their own city, they diſbanded without fighting, in ſpite of all the commands and intreaties of their leader [22]. The intrepid Edmund, not yet diſpirited by all theſe diſappointments, with incredible diligence raiſed a ſecond army, which was joined by the king at the head of the Londoners; but that weak unfortunate prince was ſtill ſurrounded with faithleſs friends, who infuſed into him ſuch doubts and fears of the fidelity of the Engliſh, that he

[22] Chron. Saxon. p. 146, 147.

could

could not be prevailed upon, by the moſt earneſt intreaties of his heroic ſon, to continue in the army, but haſtened back to London. The troops being thus abandoned by their king, could no longer be kept together, but diſbanded a ſecond time; which conſtrained the prince, with a few faithful followers, to retire into the north, and join his brother-in-law Uhtred earl of Northumberland. Canute purſued him in his retreat with a formidable army; which ſoon brought Uhtred to ſubmiſſion, and obliged Edmund to quit the field, and take ſhelter within the walls of London. Here he found his father king Ethelred at the point of death, who expired April 23, A. D. 1016, leaving his family and ſubjects in the moſt diſtreſsful circumſtances [23]. A.D. 978, to 1066.

The brave prince Edmund eldeſt ſon of the deceaſed king, was immediately crowned at London, by Livignus archbiſhop of Canterbury, aſſiſted by a very few of the Engliſh nobility and clergy, amidſt the acclamations of the loyal Londoners. But the far greateſt part of the Engliſh clergy and nobility attended Canute at Southampton, ſwore allegiance to him as their king, and abjured all the poſterity of Ethelred [24]. After theſe ceremonies, both theſe princes prepared to contend for the crown of England with ſuch ſpirit and valour, as ſhewed that neither of them was unworthy of the prize.

[23] Chron. Saxon. p. 146, 147. W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 10. R. Hoveden. Annal. pars prior. Hen. Hunt. l. 6.

[24] R. Hoveden. Annal. pars prior, p. 249.

A. D. 978, to 1066.

War between king Edmund and king Canute.

King Edmund, who from his hardineſs in war had obtained the name of *Ironſide*, immediately after his coronation haſtened into Weſſex, where he had conſiderable influence; and Canute, taking advantage of his abſence, beſieged London. But the bravery of the citizens baffled all his efforts; and Edmund having collected ſome forces, flew to their relief. This obliged Canute to raiſe the ſiege; and the two armies meeting at Gillingham in Dorſetſhire, a battle was fought, in which the Engliſh gained ſome advantage. There never was a more active or bloody campaign in England than this in the year 1016: for in the courſe of it, Canute beſieged London no leſs than three times, and was as often forced to raiſe the ſiege; and no fewer than five pitched battles were fought with prodigious obſtinacy and great effuſion of blood [25].

Pacification between the two kings, and death of king Edmund.

The nobility in both armies dreading the conſequences of a quarrel, which was carried on with ſuch uncommon fury, and ſeemed to threaten the total deſtruction of their country, prevailed upon the two kings to enter upon a treaty, when they were on the point of fighting a ſixth battle. After a ſhort negotiation, it was agreed to divide the kingdom between them, allotting to Canute the kingdoms of Mercia and Northumberland, which were chiefly inhabited by Danes, and to Edmund all the reſt of England [26]. The brave king Edmund did not many

25 Chron. Saxon. p. 147—150. 26 Id. ibid. W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 10.

days

days ſurvive this agreement, being murdered at Oxford, November 30, by the contrivance, as it was ſuſpected, of the deteſtable traitor Ædric Streon [27]. A. D. 978, to 1066.

The two infant ſons of the brave but unfortunate Edmund, Edwin and Edward, fell into the hands of Canute; who ſent them to his friend the king of Sweden, with a requeſt that they might not live to give him any trouble. Though that prince underſtood the meaning of this requeſt, he was not ſo baſe as to comply with it, but cauſed the two royal victims to be conducted to the court of Solomon king of Hungary, with a requeſt to preſerve and educate them according to their birth. Here Edwin the eldeſt died young; and Edward having married the princeſs Agatha, ſiſter to the queen of Hungary, had one ſon and two daughters, of whom we ſhall hear afterwards [28]. The two ſons of king Edmund preſerved.

After the death of their heroic king Edmund, the Engliſh made no further oppoſition, but quietly ſubmitted to the government of Canute, who was acknowledged king of all England by all the great men both of the clergy and laity, in a general aſſembly held at London A. D. 1017. To give ſome colour of juſtice to the excluſion of Edmund's two ſons and three brothers, it was affirmed by many of the members of this aſſembly (though falſely), that the ſuc- Acceſſion of king Canute.

[27] Hen. Hunt. l. 6. p. 208.

[28] W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 10. ſub fine. R. Hoveden, pars prior, p. 250.

ceſſion

A.D. 978, to 1066.

ceſſion of Canute to the whole kingdom, on the death of Edmund, had been ſtipulated in the late convention between theſe two princes [29]. To ſecure the crown which he had thus acquired, Canute rewarded ſome of his moſt powerful followers, who had contributed moſt to his elevation, with the richeſt governments. Turkill, a great Daniſh chieftain, was made duke of Eaſt-Anglia; Yric, another powerful nobleman of the ſame nation, was made duke of Northumberland; and the traitor Ædric was confirmed in the government of Mercia [30]. To prevent any inſurrection of the Engliſh in favour of Edwi, the full brother of the late king Edmund, who was ſo great a favourite with the common people that he was called the *Ceorls king*, he firſt procured the baniſhment, and afterwards the murder of that prince [31]. Canute was alſo at much pains to extinguiſh national animoſities, and bring about a thorough reconciliation between his Daniſh and Engliſh ſubjects, which he at length accompliſhed [32].

Performs ſome meritorious acts of juſtice.

This politic prince, having, by theſe and the like arts, ſecured his new-acquired dominion, proceeded to do ſome very meritorious acts of juſtice. In the time of the late troubles, ſeveral of the Engliſh nobles had ſhamefully betrayed the cauſe of their king and country. While Canute needed the treaſon he cheriſhed the traitors;

29 R. Hoveden. Annál. pars prior, p. 250.
30 Chron. Saxon. p. 151. R. Hoveden. Annal. p. 250.
31 Id. ibid. 32 W. Malmſ. l. . c. 11.

tors; but as ſoon as he found himſelf in the peaceable poſſeſſion of the crown of England, he baniſhed ſome, and put others of them to death, under various pretences [33]. Nor was it long before the arch-traitor Ædric met with the fate which he had ſo often merited: for that ſhameleſs villain having one day in council upbraided king Canute with his great ſervices, particularly with the murder of the late king Edmund, which had made way for him to aſcend the throne of England, the ferocious Dane was ſo enraged at his preſumption, that he commanded him inſtantly to be put to death, as having confeſſed himſelf guilty of murder and treaſon [34]. About the ſame time he diveſted his two dangerous and powerful ſubjects, Turkill duke of Eaſt-Anglia, and Iric duke of Northumberland, of their eſtates and honours, and ſent them into baniſhment; by which the whole kingdom was reduced to a ſtate of perfect ſubjection to his authority [35]. This enabled him to ſend back the greateſt part of his fleet and army into Denmark, retaining only forty ſhips in England [36]. A.D. 978, to 1066.

Still further to gain the affections of his Engliſh ſubjects, and prevent their making any attempts in favour of the princes of their ancient royal family, Canute, being now a widower, made propoſals of marriage to the queen-dowager Emma, widow of the late king Ethelred, who King Canute marries queen Emma.

33 W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 11.
34 Id. ibid.
35 Id. ibid.
36 Chron. Saxon. p. 151.

A.D. 978, to 1066.

reſided, with her two ſons by that king, Alfred and Edward, in the court of her brother Richard duke of Normandy. That princeſs, dazzled with the luſtre of a crown which ſhe had already worn, accepted of theſe propoſals; and giving her hand to the great enemy of her family, once more aſcended the throne of England, A. D. 1017 [37]. By this marriage alſo, the artful Dane diſarmed the reſentment of Richard duke of Normandy, who had declared himſelf the protector of the two young princes Alfred and Edward, and threatened to attempt their reſtoration to the throne of their anceſtors.

Canute's voyage into Denmark, and return into England.

By all theſe prudent meaſures, Canute, not unjuſtly called *the Great*, found himſelf ſo firmly ſeated on the throne of England, that he ventured, A. D. 1019, to make a voyage into his native kingdom of Denmark, which was then at war with Sweden, and carried with him a body of Engliſh troops, commanded by earl Godwin. Theſe troops ſoon met with a favourable opportunity of diſplaying their valour, and ſhewing their attachment to their new ſovereign. Being ſtationed neareſt to the enemy's camp, they aſſaulted it in the night, and gained a complete victory, without the leaſt aſſiſtance from the Danes [38]. This brave action greatly endeared the Engliſh in general to the king, and procured Godwin the higheſt marks of the royal favour,

37 Chron. Saxon. p. 151.

38 W. Malmſ. l. 2, c. 11. Hen. Hunt. l. 6.

and

and laid the foundation of his future greatneſs[39]. Having ſpent about a year in Denmark, and finiſhed the war with Sweden, Canute returned into England A. D. 1020; and found every thing in the moſt profound tranquillity, which continued ſeveral years; and which he ſpent in making good laws, building churches and monaſteries, and in other popular and pious works[40]. A. D. 978, to 1066.

Canute made a proſperous expedition into Norway, A. D. 1028, with a fleet of fifty ſhips, and got poſſeſſion of that kingdom, by expelling the good king Olaus, who had loſt the affections of his ſubjects, by his imprudent zeal, and vain endeavours to reſtrain them from piracy[41]. Canute conquers Norway.

A prince who was ſo great and proſperous, the ſovereign of ſo many kingdoms, could not want flatterers; and ſome of his courtiers, it is ſaid, carried their adulation ſo far as to declare in his preſence, that nothing in nature dared to diſobey his commands. To confound theſe pernicious ſycophants, he ordered his chair to be placed upon the beach near Southampton, one day when the tide was coming in, and ſitting down in it, commanded the waves, with an air of authority, to approach no nearer. But the riſing billows, regardleſs of his commands, advanced with their uſual rapidity, and obliged his majeſty to retire; who turning to his flatterers, Reproves the flattery of his courtiers.

39 W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 11. Hen. Hunt. l. 6.
40 Chron. Saxon. p. 152. W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 11.
41 Hen. Hunt. l. 6. R. d. Ducto ad an. 1028. Chron. Mail. p. 155.

A. D. 978, to 1066.

"Learn," said he, "from this example, the "insignificancy of all human power; and that "the word of God alone is omnipotent[42]." A truth sufficiently obvious, but not much inculcated by monarchs in the circle of their flatterers.

Canute's journey to Rome.

Though Canute was a wise and great prince, he was not superior to that wretched degrading superstition which reigned in that age of darkness in which he lived. Influenced chiefly by this, he made a journey to Rome, A. D. 1031, attended by a numerous and splendid train of his nobility, and lavished greater sums of money upon the churches and clergy in that city than any prince had ever done. In return for this pious liberality, he obtained some additional privileges to the English college at Rome,—a small abatement in the price of the palls of the English archbishops,—and, what he valued more than all the rest, a plenary pardon of all his sins, and the special friendship of St. Peter[43].

Canute's expedition into Cumberland.

The kings of Scotland had constantly refused to pay the ignominious tax called *Danegelt* for the province of Cumberland, which they had received from the crown of England. Canute, determined no longer to admit of this refusal, after his return from Rome, raised an army, and marched into the north, A. D. 1031, in order to compel Malcolm king of Scots to pay that

[42] Higden. p. 276. Anglia Sacra, vol. 1. p. 232.
[43] Hen. Hunt. l. 6. W. Malms. l. 2. c. 11.

tax,

tax, or to deprive him of that province. But this quarrel was compromiſed without bloodſhed, by Malcolm's reſigning Cumberland to Duncan, his grandſon and heir, who agreed to pay the demanded tribute [44]. A.D. 978, to 1066.

From this time Canute and all his kingdoms enjoyed a profound peace to the time of his death, which happened at Shaftſbury November 12, A. D. 1035 [45]. He left two ſons, named *Swein* and *Harold*, the former by a concubine, and the latter by his firſt wife; and one ſon, named *Hardicanute*, by queen Emma. This laſt prince ſhould have ſucceeded to the crown of England, if the marriage-ſettlement of his royal parents had been obſerved; but being at a diſtance in Denmark (as Swein was in Norway) at his father's death, and Harold being then in England, he ſtepped into the vacant throne, and ſeized his father's treaſures [46]. He was ſupported in this attempt chiefly by the Danes in the north, and the citizens of London; while the Engliſh in general, with earl Godwin at their head, declared for Hardicanute, the ſon of Emma; and the nation was threatened with all the horrors of a civil war. This, however, was prevented by a partition of the kingdom between the two brothers; by which it was agreed, that Harold ſhould keep poſſeſſion of London, and all the country to the north of Death of Canute, and acceſſion of Harold.

44 Fordun, l. 4. c. 41. 45 Chron. Saxon. p. 154.
46 Hen. Hunt. l. 6. R. Hoveden. Annal. pars prior.

A.D. 978, to 1066.

the Thames; and that all to the ſouth of that river ſhould be ceded to Hardicanute; whoſe ſhare, till his arrival, ſhould be governed by his mother queen Emma, who fixed her reſidence at Wincheſter[47]. This princeſs, finding herſelf ſo agreeably ſeated, and poſſeſſed of ſo much power, invited Alfred and Edward, her two ſons by king Ethelred, to come to her in England; and theſe princes having lately loſt their uncle and patron Robert Duke of Normandy, at whoſe court they had long reſided, joyfully accepted of this invitation, and came over with a numerous retinue. This journey proved fatal to Alfred, the eldeſt and moſt active of theſe princes. For Harold, ſuſpecting that Alfred deſigned to aſſert his right to the crown of England, earneſtly wiſhed to have him deſtroyed; and in order to accompliſh this, by the advice of earl Godwin (whom he had ſecretly gained to his intereſt), he invited him, with great appearance of cordiality, to his court. As the unhappy unſuſpecting prince was on his way thither, he was intercepted and taken priſoner near Gilford, by earl Godwin and his followers, who put the greateſt part of his attendants to death, with every circumſtance of cruelty[48]. The prince was carried firſt to Gillingham, where his eyes were put out, and afterwards confined in the monaſtery of Ely, where he died[49]. As ſoon as queen Emma

47 Chron. Saxon. p. 154. Hen. Hunt. l. 6.
48 R. Hoveden. Annal. Alured. Beverl. l. 8. p. 58.
49 Id. ibid. Leland. Collectan. vol. 1. p. 241.

and

and prince Edward received intelligence of the deplorable fate of the unfortunate Alfred, they fled out of England; the former to the court of Baldwin earl of Flanders, and the latter into Normandy; and Harold took poſſeſſion of the whole kingdom A. D. 1037. He did not, however, enjoy the fruits of his cruelty and ambition very long; for he died April 14, A. D. 1039[50]. This prince was remarkable for his great agility, and ſwiftneſs in walking and running; which procured him the ſurname of *Harefoot*, by which he is known in hiſtory. A. D. 978, to 1066.

Hardicanute king of Denmark happened to be in Flanders on a viſit to his mother queen Emma, when he received the news of Harold's death, and an invitation from the nobility of England to come and take poſſeſſion of that kingdom[51]. He joyfully complied with this invitation; and arriving at Sandwich a few days before Midſummer, in a fleet of forty ſhips, was received with the loudeſt acclamations by people of all ranks[52]. This joy was not of long duration: for the Engliſh ſoon found that their new king was a ferocious and arbitrary prince, who made his own violent paſſions, and not the laws of reaſon or of his country, the rule of his adminiſtration. His rage againſt his predeceſſor Harold was ſo implacable, that he commanded his body to be taken out of the grave, firſt be- Acceſſion of Hardicanute.

50 Chron. Saxon. p. 155. 51 R. Hoveden. Annal.
52 R. Hoveden. Annal. Chron. Saxon. p. 156.

A.D. 978, to 1066.

headed, and then thrown into the Thames; and the great earl Godwin, if we may believe ſome of our ancient hiſtorians, was ſo mean-ſpirited as to aſſiſt the common hangman in executing theſe commands[53]. This mighty earl, who was unqueſtionably the greateſt and moſt powerful ſubject that ever England beheld, beſides theſe humbling compliances with the tyrant's will, was obliged to employ the interceſſion of all his friends, and the moſt valuable bribes, to obliterate the remembrance of the part he had acted under the former reign; particularly in the affair of prince Alfred's murder. One of theſe bribes diſcovers Godwin's ingenuity, as well as his great wealth. It was a galley of admirable workmanſhip, and beautifully gilded, with a crew of eighty of the handſomeſt young men, magnificently dreſſed, each of them having on each arm a bracelet of gold, weighing ſixteen ounces; while all their ſwords, lances, battle-axes, helmets, and ſhields, glittered with gold and ſilver[54].

Deſtruction of Worceſter, and death of Hardicanute.

Hardicanute forfeited his popularity ſoon after his acceſſion, by impoſing a heavy tax for the payment of his Daniſh fleet and army; which became ſtill more odious by the rigorous manner in which it was collected, and a grievous famine which raged at the ſame time[55]. The people of Worceſter having killed two of the

53 R. Hoveden. Annal. pars prior, p. 251.
54 Id. ibid.
55 Chron. Saxon. p. 156.

collectors

collectors of this tax, in a popular tumult, this tyrant was so enraged, that he gave orders to the earls Leofric, Seward, and Godwin, to destroy that city, and exterminate the inhabitants. The first part of these orders was executed; but the people having got some previous notice, made their escape into an island in the Severn, from whence they afterwards returned, and rebuilt their city [56]. Prince Edward, the only surviving son of king Ethelred and queen Emma, arrived in England from Normandy A. D. 1040, and was kindly received by his uterine brother Hardicanute [57]. Though this king was naturally robust and hardy, as his name imports, he abandoned himself to such excesses in eating and drinking, as impaired his health, and hastened his death, which happened at Lambeth, June 8, A. D. 1041, when he was carousing at the wedding of a Danish nobleman [58]. A. D. 978, to 1066.

The violences of Harold and Hardicanute had rendered the Danish government so disagreeable to the English, that they were transported with joy at the sudden death of this last prince, and unanimously determined to restore the line of their own ancient princes. Edward, surnamed *the Exile*, the son of king Edmund Ironside, was the undoubted heir of that line; but having resided from his infancy in the court of Hungary, he was at so great a distance, and Accession of Edward the Confessor.

56 R. Hoveden. Annal. Simon Dunelm. p. 181.
57 Chron. Saxon. 58 Id. ibid. Hoveden. Annal.

so

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so little known in England, that he was hardly ever thought of on this occasion; and all men turned their eyes on Edward, the son of king Ethelred and queen Emma, who was then in the kingdom. This prince, naturally timid and unambitious, dreading a violent opposition from the Danes, was struck with terror, and meditated an escape into Normandy; when the great earl Godwin espoused his cause, and engaged to raise him to the throne, on condition that he married his daughter, and protected him and his family in the possession of all their estates and honours [59]. Edward having agreed to these conditions, was acknowledged as king in an assembly of the states at Gillingham, chiefly through the great eloquence, power, and interest of earl Godwin [60]. The kingdom was so much afflicted at this time by a great famine, and mortality both of men and cattle, that the king's coronation was delayed till the year after, when it was performed at Winchester on Easter-day, by Eadsig archbishop of Canterbury [61].

Hokeday.

The English, in their first transports of joy at seeing a prince of their ancient royal family on the throne, were guilty of some outrages against the Danes, which obliged some of them to abandon the country; but as the bulk of that nation quietly submitted to a revolution which they could not prevent, it was attended

59 W. Malms. l. 2. c. 13. 60 Id. ibid.
61 Id. ibid.

with

with very little bloodshed [62]. The remembrance of this revolution was long preserved in England, by an anniversary festival called *Hokeday*, on which the common people assembled in great crowds, and acted a representation of the insults and indignities which the Danes suffered on this occasion [63]. A. D. 978, to 1066.

Edward, at his accession, finding the crown much impoverished by the profuse grants of the late kings, made a general revocation of these grants; by which he obtained a great accession both of wealth and power [64]. This was indeed a severe blow to many families; but as it fell chiefly upon the Danes, they met with little pity, and no redress. He also filled his coffers, and increased his revenues, by seizing the treasures, and confiscating the estates, of his mother queen Emma, who, he pretended, had treated him very unkindly in his adversity [65]. These methods of enriching the crown, however exceptionable in themselves, became popular, by enabling Edward to take off the odious and ignominious tax called *Danegelt*, under which the English had groaned so long. Edward enriches the crown.

Edward fulfilled his engagements to earl Godwin, by marrying his daughter Edgitha, A. D. 1043 [66]. But though this lady was one of the Edward's marriage.

62 W. Malms. l. 2. c. 13. 63 Spelman. Gloss. p. 294.
64 Leges Edward. Confess. c. 16.
65 Anglia Sacra, vol. 1. p. 236. W. Malms. l. 2. c. 13.
66 Chron. Saxon. p. 157.

most

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most amiable and accomplished of her sex both in mind and person, it was an unhappy and unfruitful marriage, owing, if we may believe our monkish historians, to a vow of chastity which the king had made; for which he is highly commended by those writers, esteemed a saint, and surnamed *the Confessor*[67].

Normans promoted by Edward.

It was in some respects a misfortune, and the occasion of no little trouble both to Edward and his subjects, that he had been educated, and had spent his youthful years abroad, in the court of Normandy, where he had contracted many friendships, and received many favours. It was natural for the companions of his youth to come over, to congratulate him on his exaltation to the throne of England, in hopes of sharing with him in his prosperity, as they had assisted him in his adversity. In these expectations they were not mistaken: the grateful monarch received them kindly, loaded them with favours, and advanced some of them to the most honourable stations both in church and state. The court of England in a little time was crowded with Normans; who, basking in the sunshire of royal favour, did not behave with that modesty and self-denial which prudence would have dictated. In particular, one Robert, a Norman monk, a man of learning and abilities, became the declared favourite of Edward, and was raised by

[67] Ingulf. Hist. W. Malmsf. l. 2. c. 13. Anglia Sacra, vol. 1. p. 241.

him

him to the see of Canterbury, and the chief direction of all affairs[68]. It is easy to imagine, that this state of things was not very agreeable to the English nobles in general. But earl Godwin, who thought himself intitled to the first place in the favour and confidence of his sovereign and son-in-law, was enraged beyond measure at the archbishop and other foreign favourites. A. D. 978, to 1066.

An incident happened A. D. 1050, which blew up these secret discontents into an open flame. Eustace earl of Bologne, who had married Goda, king Edward's sister, paid a visit to his brother-in-law the king of England; and having finished his business, set out on his return home in September this year[69]. When he arrived at Dover, a quarrel arose between the townsmen and his retinue, about their lodgings, in which twenty of the townsmen and nineteen of the earl's people were killed, and many wounded on both sides. Eustace, having made his escape, with a few followers, hastened back to court, and gave the king a very unfair representation of what had happened, laying the whole blame on the people of Dover, and demanding satisfaction[70]. Edward, believing this representation, was greatly incensed at the people of Dover, and in a fit of passion commanded earl Godwin to raise an army, and in- Earl Godwin and his sons banished.

[68] Ingulf. Hist. Hen. Hunt. l. 6. [69] W. Malms. l. 2. c. 13.
[70] Chron. Saxon. p. 163.

flict

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flict exemplary vengeance on that town[71]. The earl, unwilling to be the deſtroyer of thoſe whom it was his duty to protect, declined executing this rigorous and unjuſt command; and propoſed that the people of Dover ſhould be heard before they were puniſhed. This refuſal threw the king into a more violent paſſion; which Godwin diſregarded, and retired from court, to proſecute another buſineſs, which he imagined was of more importance[72]. The Welſh, about this time, had made incurſions into Herefordſhire (of which Swain, earl Godwin's eldeſt ſon, was governor), and built a fort in it, from which they plundered the country. Godwin and his ſons raiſed an army to expel theſe invaders, and deſtroy their fort. The king in the mean time held a great council of the nobility at Gloceſter; where he was attended by the earls Seward, Leofric, and the other northern chieftains, with their numerous followers; and having been perſuaded by the Welſh and his foreign favourites, that the army raiſed by Godwin and his ſons was deſigned to act againſt himſelf, he laboured earneſtly to prevail upon the nobility to aſſiſt him with their forces in deſtroying the Godwin family. Earl Godwin and his ſons being informed of theſe hoſtile intentions of the king, determined, though with reluctance, to ſtand upon their defence, and repel

[71] Chron. Saxon. p. 163.

[72] W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 13.

force

force by force, if they were attacked[73]. The English nobility about the king advised him not to push matters to extremity, but to call another great council to meet at London in September to determine all these differences[74]. All the nobility of the south and north of England attended this council, with their followers, which made a great army. Earl Godwin and his sons being summoned to appear before this assembly, to answer for their late conduct, demanded hostages to be given them for the safety of their persons; which were denied. The council then proceeded to judge them in their absence, outlawed Swain, the eldest son of Godwin, and condemned that earl and his other sons to surrender themselves, or depart the kingdom in five days. These unfortunate noblemen chose rather to abandon their country, than trust their persons in the hands of their enemies. Godwin, with his three sons, Swain, Gurth, and Tosti, took shelter in the court of Baldwin earl of Flanders, whose daughter Tosti had married; and Harold and Leofwin, his two other sons, retired into Ireland[75]. Even the fair and innocent Edgitha, though partner of the throne and bed of Edward, was involved in the ruin of her family, being stripped of every thing by her ungenerous husband, and thrust into a monastery[76]. All the immense possessions of God-

A.D. 978, to 1066.

73 W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 13.
74 Id. ibid.
75 Chron. Saxon. p. 164.
76 W. Malmf.

A. D. 9-8, to 1066.

win and his sons were confiscated, their places of power and trust bestowed upon others, chiefly on the Norman favourites; and the greatness of this mighty family, so late the envy of their fellow-subjects, and terror of their sovereign, seemed to be quite subverted, and laid in ruins[77].

William duke of Normandy visits England.

Soon after the banishment of earl Godwin and his sons, when the Norman interest was triumphant at the court of England, William duke of Normandy paid a visit to his cousin king Edward; from whom he received the most honourable entertainment, and many rich presents, in return for the generous protection and support which the duke's family had given him in his adversity. It was in this visit that Robert the Norman, archbishop of Canterbury, is said to have given William the first hint of Edward's intention of making him his successor; an intention which was probably suggested by that prelate[78].

The Godwin family restored.

Though earl Godwin and his sons had been obliged to yield to the torrent, and forsake their country, they were men of too much spirit to sit down quietly, without attempting to revenge the injuries, and repair the losses which they had suffered. They had still many friends and much treasure, with which they soon procured a fleet in the ports of Flanders, and put to sea in the beginning of summer A. D. 1052, in order to

[77] Chron. Saxon. p. 164. [78] Wau Hist. con. p. 448.

invade

invade England. As Edward had expected this, he had provided a superior fleet, with which he prevented their landing in England, and obliged them to put back to Flanders. The royal fleet then returned to Sandwich; and the two Norman earls, Ralph and Oddo, who commanded it, imagining that no further attempts would be made that year, laid up their ships and dismissed their sailors. As soon as Godwin received intelligence of this, he put to sea; and being joined near the isle of Wight by his son Harold, with a fleet of nine ships from Ireland, they entered all the harbours on the coast, raised heavy contributions, and pressed all the ships and sailors into their service. By these means, having collected a great fleet and army, they entered the river Thames, and boldly approached London, where the king lay with his army. Edward, instigated by his Norman confidents, for some time stood firm, and seemed determined to risk a battle; but the English nobility interposing, a negotiation was set on foot, which soon terminated in a peace, on these conditions:—That earl Godwin, his sons, and followers, should be restored to all their estates and honours, and should give hostages to the king for their future loyalty;—and that the Norman favourites, who had been the occasion of all these troubles, should leave the kingdom. This peace was confirmed the day after in a great council held at London; in which earl Godwin and his sons were declared innocent of the crimes with A.D. 978, to 1066.

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which they had been charged, and publicly received into the king's favour. At the ſame time queen Edgitha was reſtored to her liberty and former rank[79]. The obnoxious Normans made their eſcape with great ſecrecy and precipitation, for fear of being torn in pieces by the populace.

Earl Godwin's death.

The great earl Godwin did not long ſurvive to enjoy this happy change in the circumſtances of his affairs and family. He died ſuddenly April 15, A. D. 1053, as he was ſitting at table with the king; and was ſucceeded in his honours and great offices by his eldeſt ſurviving ſon Harold; beſides whom, he left, by his only wife the lady Githa, daughter of Canute the Great, four other ſons, all poſſeſſed of many eſtates and dignities[80].

Ambition of Harold.

Harold, now at the head of the Godwin family, was not inferior to his father in power and wealth, and ſuperior to him in virtue and abilities. Beholding the throne filled by a childleſs prince, in the decline of life, without any one in the kingdom who had any pretenſions to ſucceed him, the true heir at a great diſtance, and almoſt quite forgotten, he ſoon began to caſt ambitious eyes on the crown; and to ſecure the ſucceſſion to it became the great object of all his deſigns and actions[81]. He paid great court

79 Chron. Saxon. p. 165—168. R. Hoveden. Annal. Higden, p. 279. Alured. Beverlien. l. 8.

80 Chron. Saxon. p. 168. See Biographia Britannica, art. Godwin.

81 Ingulf. Hiſt.

to Edward, in hopes of engaging him to appoint him his ſucceſſor; he laboured earneſtly to add to the number of his friends, and increaſe his treaſures, ſometimes by means not very honourable[82]. He gained great credit ſoon after his father's death by a ſucceſsful expedition into Wales[83]. Some events happened not long after, which ſeemed to favour the views and encourage the hopes of Harold. Seward earl of Northumberland, and Leofric earl of Mercia, who were the moſt powerful noblemen in England, and might have formed a dangerous oppoſition to his elevation to the throne, were both removed by death A. D. 1055, and Harold obtained the earldom of Northumberland for his brother Toſti, and that of Eaſt-Anglia for himſelf; by which means about two thirds of all England came under the dominion of his family[84]. A.D. 978, to 1066.

Though Edward was not ignorant of the ambitious views of Harold, and did not favour them; yet he knew not how to take any effectual meaſures for their diſappointment. Sometimes he inclined to nominate William duke of Normandy his ſucceſſor, as one who would be moſt able to diſpute the throne with Harold. At other times he was diſpoſed to recall his nephew prince Edward, ſon of king Edmund Ironſide, whoſe title was unqueſtionable, in hopes that the Engliſh would unite in ſupporting the Prince Edward comes from Hungary into England, and dies ſoon after.

[82] Hen. Hunt. l. 6. [83] Simon Dunelm.
[84] Chron. Saxon. p. 169. Hen. Hunt. l. 6.

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line of their ancient kings. After much balancing, he embraced this laſt meaſure as moſt juſt and honourable, and diſpatched Aldred biſhop of Worceſter to the court of Hungary, to conduct Edward and his family into England. That unfortunate prince arrived in his native country A. D. 1057, after he had lived about forty years in exile, and died within leſs than a month after his arrival; leaving an infant ſon, named *Edgar Atheling*; and two daughters, Margaret, afterwards queen of Scotland, and Chriſtina, who became a nun [85]. The hopes of Harold, which had been a little damped by the arrival of prince Edward, were revived again by his death, and the tender age and unpromiſing genius of his ſon.

Voyage of earl Harold into Normandy.

There was one obſtacle in Harold's way to the throne which it ſeemed difficult to remove. Ulnoth, one of his brothers, and a nephew named *Haquin*, had been given to Edward as hoſtages at the late pacification, who had ſent them to William duke of Normandy, where they were ſtill detained [86]. Harold often importuned the king for the releaſe of theſe precious pledges; and at laſt obtained a commiſſion, according to ſome of our hiſtorians, to make a voyage into Normandy to procure their freedom; though other hiſtorians aſſign other reaſons

[85] Chron. Saxon. p. 169. W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 13.
[86] Id. ibid.

for

for this voyage[87]. However this may be, he set out with a numerous and splendid retinue; and after meeting with some disasters, arrived at the court of Normandy. William was not ignorant of the mighty power of Harold, and strongly suspected his ambitious views; and was therefore in some doubt whether he should destroy him as a rival, or gain him for a friend. Embracing this last counsel, he entertained him in the most friendly manner, made him many valuable presents, and still greater promises, if he would assist him in mounting the throne of England on the demise of Edward. Harold, seeing himself in the hands of his rival, promised every thing that was desired, and even confirmed his promises with the most solemn oaths. William, to attach him still more firmly to his interests, engaged to load him with additional honours, and to give him his own daughter in marriage. At his departure, he gave him up the youngest of the hostages, and promised to send the other[88]. This is the most plausible account of this strange affair; but it must be confessed, that it is far from being satisfactory; and there seems to be some secret in this transaction, which none of our historians have penetrated. One thing, however, is certain, that Harold was no sooner out of William's reach, than he totally disregarded all his

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[87] W. Malms. l. 2. c. 13. Hoveden. Annal. Brompt. p. 947. Higden, l. 6. Hen. Hunt. l. 6.

[88] Id. ibid.

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promiſes and oaths, and proceeded with redoubled ardour to ſecure his own ſucceſſion to the throne of England.

Expedition of earl Harold into Wales.

The Welſh having renewed their incurſions A. D. 1064, under their enterpriſing prince Griffith, Harold, in conjunction with his brother Toſti, earl of Northumberland, invaded Wales both by ſea and land. This invaſion was planned with ſo much prudence, and proſecuted with ſo much vigour, that the Welſh, to preſerve themſelves from that deſtruction with which they were threatened, ſeized their own prince, who had been the occaſion of the war, cut off his head, and ſent it to Harold, with an offer to ſubmit to the government of any perſon he ſhould think proper to appoint [89]. By this action, ſo honourable and advantageous to his country, Harold's reputation and popularity were very much increaſed.

Earl Toſti expelled.

Though Toſti, earl of Northumberland, had done good ſervice in the late expedition into Wales, and on ſome other occaſions, he was a man of violent paſſions, and had been guilty of many acts of cruelty and oppreſſion in his government; and the Northumbrians, finding no end or redreſs of their grievances, broke out into open rebellion againſt him, killed about two hundred of his retainers, the inſtruments of his oppreſſions, ſeized his treaſures, and drove him out of their country A. D. 1064. The expelled

[89] Chron. Saxon. p. 170. W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 13. Hen. Hunt. l. 6.

earl

earl haſtened to the king, and made loud complaints of the injury which he had received; and Edward, too haſtily believing the juſtice of theſe complaints, commanded Harold to raiſe an army, reſtore his brother to his government, and puniſh the Northumbrians, who had choſen Morcar, the ſon of Alfgar duke of Mercia, for their earl. When Harold approached the borders of Northumberland with his army, he was met by a deputation from the inſurgents, who gave him a detail of the many cruelties and oppreſſions of which their late earl had been guilty; and repreſented, in a firm tone, that though they were willing to ſubmit to legal government, they were determined to die with their ſwords in their hands, rather than ſuffer his reſtoration. Harold, convinced of the juſtice of their repreſentations, abandoned his brother's cauſe, prevailed with the king to pardon the Northumbrians, and confirm Morcar in the earldom. Toſti, deſpairing of his reſtoration to his government, and enraged beyond meaſure at the conduct of his brother Harold, retired to the court of Baldwin earl of Flanders, his father-in-law [90].

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Harold married.

Harold, ſoon after this tranſaction, procured the government of Mercia for Edwin, earl Morcar's brother, and alſo married Edgiva, the ſiſter of theſe two noblemen. By theſe juſt and prudent meaſures, he gained the hearts of the people

[90] Chron. Saxon. p. 171. W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 13. Hen. Hunt. l. 6.

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of Mercia and Northumberland, and attached the two powerful earls Edwin and Morcar moſt firmly to his intereſt [91].

Death of Edward the Confeſſor, and acceſſion of Harold.

When Harold was thus in the zenith of his power and popularity, the throne became vacant by the death of Edward the Confeſſor, January 5, A. D. 1066. On the very next day he was buried with great ſolemnity, in his new church of St. Peter's, Weſtminſter, all the members of a great council which he had ſummoned for the dedication of that church attending his funeral [92]. On that ſame buſy day, earl Harold was crowned king of England in St. Paul's, by Aldred archbiſhop of York, with as much quiet and unanimity, as if his title to the crown had been as clear and indiſputable as it was defective [93]. He alleged indeed, that the late king had appointed him his ſucceſſor; but of this he was never able to produce ſufficient evidence [94]. The truth is, that Harold owed his elevation to the throne to his own great power and wealth, his intimate connections with the chief nobility, the favour of the clergy, the love of the citizens of London, and his general popularity. This popularity was ſo great, that though Edgar Atheling, the undoubted heir of the crown, was on the ſpot, his name was hardly mentioned on this occaſion [95].

91 Order. Vitalis, p. 492.

92 Chron. Saxon. p. 171. W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 13. Hen. Hunt. l. 6. Hoveden. Annal. Ingulf. Hiſt. 93 Id. ibid.

94 Hoveden. Annal. Alured. Beverl. l. 8. p. 122.

95 Chron. Saxon. p. 172. W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 13. ſub fine.

Harold

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His endeavours to preſerve his crown.

Harold endeavoured to ſecure his crown by the ſame popular arts by which he had obtained it; and his adminiſtration is acknowledged to have been wiſe, and juſt, and gracious [96]. He was not ſo weak as to expect the peaceable enjoyment of the glittering prize which he had obtained; for though he ſeems to have been under no apprehenſions from the young, weak, and friendleſs Edgar, he was not ſo eaſy with reſpect to his own brother Toſti, and the duke of Normandy, knowing the implacable reſentment of the one, and the power and ambition of the other. It was therefore one of his firſt cares to provide a fleet and army to defend himſelf againſt theſe dangerous enemies. It was not long before ambaſſadors arrived from the duke of Normandy, who reproached Harold, in their maſter's name, for the breach of his oath; and required him, in a peremptory tone, to deſcend from that throne which he had uſurped. To which Harold returned this firm and prudent anſwer, That his oath was both unlawful and involuntary, and therefore not binding; and that he was determined to defend the throne to which he had been raiſed by the unanimous ſuffrage of the nobility, clergy, and people [97]. William, on receiving this anſwer, haſtened his preparations for an invaſion of England, in order to obtain by force what he could not obtain by negotiation.

96 Alured. Beverl. l. 8. p. 122. W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 13.

97 Id. ibid. l. 3. Ingulf. Hiſt.

The

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Attempts to dethrone Harold defeated.

The baniſhed earl of Northumberland was almoſt frantic with rage and envy when he heard of his brother's elevation to the throne of England. He flew to the duke of Normandy, who had married Matilda, his wife's ſiſter, and urged him to haſten his preparations for pulling down their common enemy [98]. He ſent meſſengers into Denmark and Norway, to rouſe the piratical adventurers of thoſe countries to renew their incurſions; and impatient to be in action, he collected a ſmall fleet in the ports of Flanders, with which he ſailed towards England about the beginning of May, and attempted to make deſcents on ſeveral parts of the coaſts, but was every where repulſed with loſs [99]. Upon this ill ſucceſs, being deſerted by many of his ſailors, he retired into Scotland, and earneſtly ſolicited Malcolm king of Scots to eſpouſe his quarrel; but in vain [100]. His meſſengers had been more ſucceſsful in Norway, and had engaged Harold Harfagar, king of that country, to invade England with his whole force; and that prince approaching the Northumbrian coaſt about the beginning of September, with a fleet of three hundred ſhips, was joined by Toſti with his fleet from Scotland. Theſe two commanders entered the Humber, landed their forces, and advanced towards York; near which city they were encountered, September 19, by the two earls Edwin

[98] Order. Vital. p. 492.

[99] Chron. Saxon. p. 172. W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 13. Hoveden. Annal.

[100] Id. ibid.

and

and Morcar. The conflict was at first bloody, and the victory for some time doubtful; but at length the earls were defeated, and the city of York surrendered to the conquerors. But their triumph was of very short duration; for king Harold having received intelligence of this invasion, marched his army with great expedition into the north, and came up with the enemy September 24, near Stanford-bridge; where he obtained a complete victory, killed both earl Tosti and the king of Norway, cut almost their whole army in pieces, took all their spoils, and suffered only twenty ships of their whole fleet to escape [101]. A D. 978, to 1066.

By this great victory, Harold was delivered from two of his most dangerous enemies, crowned with laurels, and loaden with spoils. But this year (the most important and eventful in the annals of England) was big with the most sudden and mighty reverses of fortune that are to be found in history. While Harold was celebrating his victory at York, he received intelligence, that William duke of Normandy had landed at Pevensy in Sussex, on September 25, at the head of an army of 60,000 men; which soon after deprived him of his crown and life, and brought about another great revolution, which will be the subject of the third book of this work [102]. Landing of William duke of Normandy.

[101] Hoveden. Annal. Chron. Saxon. p. 172. W. Malms. l. 2. c. 13.

[102] Chron. Saxon. p. 172. W. Malms. l. 3. Hen. Hunt. l. 7.

It

A. D. 978, to 1066.

It is now neceſſary to give a very brief deduction of the civil and military affairs of Wales and Scotland, from A. D. 978, to 1066.

At the beginning of this period, Owen ap Howel Dha was prince of South Wales, and Howel ap Iwaf prince of North Wales [103]. Eneon, the eldeſt ſon of Owen, who was an excellent prince, loſt his life A. D. 983, in attempting to ſuppreſs an inſurrection in Guentland, leaving two ſons, Edwin and Theodore; and the year after, Howel was ſlain in making an incurſion into England, and ſucceeded by his brother Cadwallon in the principality of North Wales [104]. Cadwallon defeated and killed his couſin Ionaval, the ſon of his eldeſt brother Meyric, and right heir to the principality; but was himſelf defeated and ſlain the year after by Meredyth ap Owen, who thereby got poſſeſſion of North Wales. Owen prince of South Wales dying A. D. 987, his youngeſt ſon Meredyth, who had conquered North Wales, ſeized alſo South Wales, excluding his two nephews, Edwin and Theodore, the ſons of his elder brother Eneon. As Meredyth was an uſurper of North Wales from Edwal ap Meyric, and of South Wales from Edwin ap Eneon, his reign was one continued ſcene of war and confuſion; and the Danes taking advantage of theſe inteſtine broils, obliged him to pay a tribute of one penny for every man in Wales [105],

[103] Powel, Hiſt. Wales, p. 65.
[104] Id. p. 67.
[105] Id. p. 70.

which

which was called *the tribute of the black army* [106]. Meredith, after a turbulent and unhappy reign, died A. D. 998, leaving only one daughter, name *Angharad*, who married Lhewelyn ap Sitsylht, a nobleman deſcended by his mother from the ancient princes of North Wales. A. D. 978, to 1066.

The death of prince Meredith without male iſſue, and the infancy of Iago, the ſon of Edwal, occaſioned freſh diſputes about the ſucceſſion. At length an adventurer, named *Acdan ap Blegored*, whoſe birth was ſo obſcure, that even the Welſh genealogiſts cannot inform us who was his grandfather, triumphed over all his rivals, and became prince of North Wales A. D. 1003, and kept poſſeſſion of it to A. D. 1015, when he was ſlain in battle with his four ſons, by Lhewelyn ap Sitsylht [107]. Wales enjoyed great proſperity under the government of Lhewelyn. "The earth brought forth double; the people "proſpered in all their affairs, and multiplied "wonderfully; the cattle increaſed in great "number; ſo that there was neither beggar nor "poor man from the ſouth to the north ſea [108]." This prince was ſlain in battle A. D. 1021, by Howel ap Edwin ap Eneon ap Owen ap Howel Dha, the right heir of the principality of South Wales. Though Lhewelyn left a ſon named *Gryffyth*, he was ſucceeded in the government of North Wales by Iago ap Edwal ap Meyric ap

[106] Powel, Hiſt. Wales, p. 71. [107] Id. p. 83.
[108] Id. p. 84.

Edwal

A.D. 978, to 1066.

Edwal Voel, the right heir of that principality [109]. The government of South Wales was long disputed between Howel, the right heir, and an usurper named *Rythereh ap Ieſtyn*, who fell in battle A. D. 1032; by which Howel obtained poſſeſſion of the territories of his anceſtors [110]. Gryffyth, the ſon of Lhewelyn late prince of North Wales, was very young when his father was killed; but as ſoon as he arrived at the manly age, he collected an army of adventurers, and the friends of his family, A. D. 1037; with which he defeated and killed Iago ap Edwal, and got poſſeſſion of North Wales; to which he ſoon after added South Wales, by the expulſion of its prince Howel [111]. This Gryffyth ap Lhewelyn prince of all Wales was one of the braveſt princes that ever reigned in that country. He not only defended his own dominions againſt all his enemies with undaunted courage, but he made frequent incurſions into England. In one of theſe, A. D. 1055, he firſt plundered, and then burnt Hereford, and carried away many captives and much ſpoil [112]. At length the inroads of this bold invader became ſo frequent and deſtructive, that Harold, who aſpired to the crown of England, thought he could do nothing more popular than to put an effectual ſtop to them; which he accompliſhed in the manner above related [113]. After the death of Gryffyth,

109 Powel, Hiſt. Wales, 87. 110 Id. ibid. 111 Id. p. 91.
112 Id. p. 979. Simon Dunelm. R. Hoveden. Annal.
113 See p. 150.

king

king Edward, to whom the Welſh had yielded the nomination of their prince, appointed Blethyn and Rywalhan, the ſons of the princeſs Angharat, and uterine brothers to Gryffyth, to be governors or princes of North Wales; while Meredyth ap Owen ap Edwin was, by the ſame authority, appointed prince of South Wales; and theſe three were princes of Wales when William duke of Normandy landed with his army in England, A. D. 1066 [114]. A.D. 978, to 1066.

It cannot be denied by any unprejudiced friend of truth, that the hiſtory of Scotland, in this period, is very dark and doubtful;—that many of the narratives of its modern writers are not ſupported by ſufficient evidence, and will hardly bear a critical inveſtigation. This darkneſs and uncertainty is owing to various cauſes; but chiefly to the loſs of records, chronicles, and other hiſtorical monuments in the long and cruel wars between the Scotch and Engliſh in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and to the too haſty deſtruction of monaſteries, and their libraries, at the Reformation [115]. A few fragments, which bear the marks of genuine antiquity, have eſcaped the general wreck, and yield a little light, which becomes gradually more clear as we approach the concluſion of this period [116]. Hiſtory of Scotland.

Though Kenneth II. at his death, A. D. 994, left a ſon named *Malcolm*, prince of Cumberland, he was ſucceeded in the throne of Scotland by Conſtantine.

[114] Powel's Hiſt. p. 103.

[115] See Innes's Critical Eſſays, p. 552—526.

[116] Id. in Append.

Con-

A. D. 978, to 1066. Conſtantine, the ſon of Culen, his immediate predeceſſor, according to the frequent cuſtom of thoſe times [117]. This was the occaſion of a civil war between Malcolm and Conſtantine; in the courſe of which the latter was ſlain in a battle which was fought at Cramond A. D. 996 [118].

Grime. But Malcolm, who was not preſent in this battle, did not reap any advantage from this victory. For Grime, the ſon of the late king Duff, collecting the ſcattered remains of Conſtantine's army, haſtened to Scone, and was there advanced to the throne by his followers. Malcolm, who was then in Cumberland, was much provoked at this ſecond excluſion from his father's throne, and proſecuted the war with ſo much fury, that the unhappy country was threatened with deſtruction. To prevent this, Fothad, a pious and much-reſpected biſhop, interpoſed, and laboured to bring about a peace; which he at length accompliſhed on theſe terms: "That "Grime ſhould enjoy the kingdom for his life; "and that Malcolm ſhould ſucceed him; and "that from thenceforward the rule of ſucceſſion "eſtabliſhed by the late king Kenneth, viz. that "a father ſhould be ſucceeded by his ſon, rather "than by his nephew, ſhould be inviolably "obſerved [119]." After this peace had continued about eight years, the war was rekindled; and Grime being mortally wounded in a battle on

[117] Fordun, l. 4. c. 34. Chron. Mailroſ. A. D. 994.
[118] Id. ibid. Buchan. l. 6. [119] Id. ibid.

Aſcen-

Aſcenſion-day A. D. 1004, died the day after, and was ſucceeded by Malcolm, with the conſent of all parties [120]. A. D. 978, to 1066.

Malcolm II. while he was prince of Cumberland, never would conſent to pay the ignominious tax of Danegelt, which involved him in continual quarrels with the Danes. They even purſued him into his new dominions, after his acceſſion to the throne of Scotland; but were defeated by an army commanded by his grandſon Duncan. Provoked at this defeat, they infeſted the coaſts of Scotland for ſome years with frequent deſcents, fought ſeveral battles, with various ſucceſs, and at length gained ſome footing in the countries of Moray and Buchan; but were ſoon after forced to evacuate theſe countries, with a promiſe never to return [121]. After the departure of theſe unwelcome gueſts, Scotland enjoyed a profound peace for about twenty years: a thing not very common in thoſe turbulent unſettled times. Malcolm II.

King Malcolm II. if we may believe ſome hiſtorians, was a prince of the moſt unbounded liberality, and gave away all the crown-lands to his nobility as a reward for their bravery againſt the Danes; reſerving no property to himſelf and his ſucceſſors but the Mute-hill of Scone [122]. But this is both incredible in itſelf, and contradicted by the ſubſequent narrations of theſe very Fabulous ſtory.

120 Buchan. l. 6. Fordun, l. 4. c. 40.

121 Boeth. l. 2. Buchan. l. 6.

122 See Maitland's Hiſt. Scotl. vol. 1. p. 319. Fordun, l. 4. c. 43.

A.D. 978, to 1066.

writers, who tell us of biſhopricks erected, monaſteries built, and endowed with many lands, by this king (after he is ſuppoſed to have denuded himſelf of all his poſſeſſions), and by his immediate ſucceſſors. Malcolm was ſurpriſed and ſlain by ſome conſpirators in the caſtle of Glamis, A. D. 1034, in the eightieth year of his life, and the thirtieth of his reign [123].

Duncan.

Duncan prince of Cumberland, ſon to Beatrix, the eldeſt daughter of king Malcolm, and Crynyn Abthane of the Iſles, ſucceeded his grandfather in the throne of Scotland. The beginning of this prince's reign was diſturbed by an inſurrection, raiſed chiefly by one Macdowal a powerful chieftain of the weſtern iſles, aſſiſted by many adventurers from Ireland, and the neighbouring coaſts of Scotland, where they committed great ravages. But theſe inſurgents were defeated, and almoſt all cut in pieces, by Bancho thane of Lochaber, and Macbeth the king's couſin, ſon to Doaca, the late king Malcolm's youngeſt daughter, and Finele thane of Angus [124]. Soon after the ſuppreſſion of this inſurrection, Swein king of Norway invaded Scotland with a great fleet and army, and defeated Duncan in a bloody battle near Culroſs, who retired with the remains of his army to Perth; which was immediately inveſted by the victors. The Scots being hard preſſed, propoſed an accommodation; and while the conditions of it were negotiating, ſent a pre-

[123] Fordun, l. 4. c. 41.

[124] Buchanan, l. 7.

ſent

sent of provisions, and great quantities of liquors, to the king of Norway and his army. This proved to them, as it was intended, a fatal present: for drinking plentifully, according to their custom, they were not only intoxicated, but thrown into a profound sleep, by the somniferous quality of the liquor, in which nightshade had been infused. When the Norwegians were in this condition, the Scots sallied out, cut the greatest part of them in pieces; and king Swein being carried to his ships in a state of insensibility, by some of his attendants, was preserved with great difficulty [125]. It must, however, be confessed, that Fordun, the most ancient Scotch historian, makes no mention, either of the above rebellion or invasion; but expressly affirms, that Scotland enjoyed a profound peace, both from foreign and domestic enemies, during the whole reign of king Duncan [126]. However this may be, it is universally acknowledged, that Duncan was a just and good prince, but of too mild and gentle a spirit for the times in which he lived. This encouraged his bold ambitious cousin Macbeth to form a plot for depriving him of his crown and life; which he executed at Inverness, A. D. 1040; and was immediately after crowned king of Scotland by his followers, to the exclusion of Malcolm Canmore prince of Cumberland, and Donald Bane, the two sons of the murdered king [127].

A.D. 978, to 1066.

[125] Boet. l. 2. Buchan. l. 7. [126] Fordun, l. 4. c. 44.
[127] Id. c. 44, 45. Boet. l. 12. Buchan. l. 7.

A.D. 978, to 1066. Macbeth.

Theſe two young princes, having heard of their father's death, raiſed ſome forces to avenge his murder, and aſſert their own rights; but finding themſelves too weak to contend with the uſurper, they left the kingdom to preſerve their lives. Malcolm retired into his principality of Cumberland, and Donald into the weſtern iſles [128]. Macbeth being now in the peaceable poſſeſſion of the throne, endeavoured to ſecure it, by a juſt and popular adminiſtration, protecting his ſubjects from the lawleſs violence of robbers, and the oppreſſions of the nobility. By theſe means the firſt ten years of his reign were very happy, being undiſturbed, either by inteſtine commotions or foreign invaſions. By degrees, however, Macbeth departed from this wiſe and juſt courſe of government, and degenerated into a ſuſpicious and cruel tyrant. Becoming jealous of Bancho thane of Lochaber, who had been the chief inſtrument of his elevation to the throne, he invited him, with his ſon Fleance, to an entertainment, and appointed certain aſſaſſins to kill them both in their return home; by whom Bancho was actually ſlain, and Fleance made his eſcape with great difficulty [129]. Several noblemen, who were ſecretly in the intereſt of Malcolm prince of Cumberland, hearing of the fate of Bancho, abandoned their country, and retired into the territories of that prince, for their own preſervation. Macduff thane of

[128] Buchan. l. 7.

[129] Boct. l. 2. Buchan. l. 7.

Fife was one of these fugitives, who retired with so much precipitation, that he left his wife and children behind him, who were all put to death by Macbeth, and his estate confiscated [130]. These exiles, and particularly Macduff, earnestly intreated Malcolm to raise an army, and invade Scotland, in order to vindicate his own right and theirs, and to take vengeance on the tyrant for their common injuries. The prince, after some hesitation, complied with their intreaties; and having obtained a considerable aid from Edward the Confessor, king of England, commanded by the famous Seward earl of Northumberland, he entered Scotland at the head of a powerful army, A. D. 1054 [131]. Macbeth, who was a brave and warlike prince, was not wanting to himself on this occasion; but raising all his forces, encountered the invaders in several actions; in one of which earl Seward lost his eldest son, a young nobleman of great hopes [132]. By degrees, all the low countries submitted to Malcolm, and Macbeth retired into the highlands, trusting much to the difficulty of the country and the strength of his castle of Dunsinnan. Near this place a decisive battle was fought, A. D. 1057; in which Macbeth was defeated, and slain by the hands of Macduff, and the greatest part of his army cut in pieces [133]. A few of Macbeth's most zealous

A.D. 978, to 1066.

[130] Fordun, l. 4. c. 46.

[131] Id. l. 5. c. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. R. Hoveden. Annal.

[132] Id. ibid. Hen. Hunt. l. 6.

[133] Fordun, l. 5. c. 7. Boet. l. 12. Buchan. l. 7.

A.D. 978, to 1066.

partiſans, who eſcaped from this battle, deſpairing of mercy from the conqueror, proclaimed Lulah, the ſon of the late uſurper, king. But Lulah, who was a weak prince, was defeated and ſlain in Strathbolgie, about four months after the battle of Dunſinnan [134]. Upon this all Scotland ſubmitted with joy to Malcolm, who was crowned at Scone, amidſt the acclamations of an infinite multitude of people of all ranks. This prince, who was ſurnamed *Canmore*, or *Great Head*, filled the throne of Scotland when William duke of Normandy landed with his army in England, A. D. 1066; and therefore the events of his reign fall more properly to be related in the firſt chapter of the third book of this work.

[134] Fordun, l. 5. c. 8.

THE

HISTORY

OF

GREAT BRITAIN.

BOOK II.

CHAP. II.

The hiſtory of Religion in Britain, from the arrival of the Saxons, A. D. 449, *to the landing of William duke of Normandy,* A. D. 1066.

Plan of this chapter.

THE arrival of the Saxons in Britain was as fatal to the ſacred as to the ſecular intereſts of thoſe who invited them; and it brought about as great a revolution in the religious as in the civil ſtate of this iſland. For the Saxons, who came over under Hengiſt and Horſa, and thoſe who followed them at different times, and under different leaders, being all Heathens and idolaters, extirpated the Chriſtian religion, with its profeſſors, wherever their arms prevailed, and introduced their own abſurd and impious ſuperſtitions in its place. At length, however, theſe

Pagan invaders were by degrees converted to Chriſtianity, and from thenceforward joined with the other inhabitants of this iſland in the profeſſion of that holy religion. In order, therefore, to give our readers a diſtinct view of the ſtate of religion in Britain during this long period, it will be neceſſary to lay before them,—1. A very brief delineation of the religion of the Anglo-Saxons while they continued Heathens, and of the ſtate of the Britiſh churches in thoſe unhappy times;—2. An account of the converſion of the ſeveral ſtates of the heptarchy to the Chriſtian religion;—and, 3. The church-hiſtory of all the nations of Britain, from the converſion of the Saxons to the landing of the Normans.

SECTION I.

The hiſtory and delineation of the religion of the Heathen Saxons, from their arrival in Britain, A. D. 449, to the coming of Auſtin for their converſion, A. D. 596, with a brief account of the ſtate of the Chriſtian churches in Britain in that period.

Cent. V. Plan of this ſection.

AS the Anglo-Saxons, who ſettled in Britain in the fifth and ſixth centuries, came from the north-weſt corner of Germany, contiguous to Denmark, we have reaſon to believe that their religion was the ſame, or very nearly the ſame, with that of the Pagan Danes. In delineating the

the Pagan religion of the Anglo-Saxons and Danes, we ſhall give a very brief account, of its prieſts, who taught its principles, and performed its ſacred rites; of the religious principles which they taught; of the deities whom they worſhipped; of the various acts of worſhip which they paid to theſe deities, with their times, places, and other circumſtances. This was the order obſerved in deſcribing the Druidiſm of the ancient Britons [1]; and there is no reaſon to deviate from on this occaſion. Cent. V.

It muſt be confeſſed, that it is impoſſible to give ſo ſatisfactory an account of the Saxon and Daniſh prieſts as we did of the Britiſh Druids; becauſe thoſe prieſts were almoſt quite unknown to the Greek and Roman writers. Julius Cæſar poſitively affirms, "That the Germans had no "Druids to preſide over the rites of their reli-"gion [2]." By this he cannot mean, that the Germans had no prieſts, but only that their prieſts were not called Druids, and were not in all reſpects the ſame with thoſe of the Gauls and Britons. This aſſertion of Cæſar hath indeed been called in queſtion by ſeveral modern authors; but the poſitive teſtimony of ſuch a writer as Cæſar, who had ſo good an opportunity of knowing the truth of what he teſtified, is more to be regarded than the vague conjectures of a thouſand moderns [3]. Though Tacitus frequently Anglo-Saxon and Daniſh prieſts.

[1] See vol. 1. p. 135. [2] Cæſar de Bel. Gal. l. 6.

[3] Elius Shedius, p. 254. Frikius, p. 44. Keyſler, p. 378.

mentions

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mentions the prieſts of the ancient Germans, he never calls them Druids, as he doth thoſe of the ancient Britons; and Cluverius, one of the moſt learned of the German antiquaries, confeſſeth, that he had not been able to diſcover the name of thoſe prieſts[4]. The conjectures of the two learned authors mentioned below, concerning this matter, are not ſupported by ſufficient evidence[5].

Their hierarchy.

We know not, with any certainty, what were the different degrees and orders in the hierarchy of the Saxon and Daniſh prieſts, or whether, like the Druids, they were divided into ſeveral claſſes, which performed diſtinct parts in their religious rites. In a celebrated temple of Odin, or Wodin, the chief deity of both theſe nations, it is ſaid, there were twelve Drottes of ſuperior dignity, who preſided over all the affairs of religion, and governed all the other prieſts[6]. There was one who bore the name, and exerciſed the office, of the chief prieſt in the kingdom of Northumberland, and probably in each of the other kingdoms of the heptarchy[7].

4 Tacit. Annal. l. 14. c. 30. Cluver. German. Antiq. p. 166.

5 Mr. Mallet, in his Introduction to the Hiſtory of Denmark, c. 4. conjectures, that the Heathen prieſts among the Danes were called *Drottes*, and that there is ſome affinity between *Drottes* and *Druids*. But the etymologies of theſe two words are totally different. Dr. Macpherſon, Diſſertat. 19. thinks, that *Coiffi* was the name of the prieſts among the Heathen Saxons; but it ſeems rather to be the proper name of a particular perſon.

6 Mallet, Introduc. Hiſt. Denmark, c. 7. Bedæ Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 2. c. 13.

7 Mallet, ibid. c. 7.

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The prieſthood among the Danes and Saxons, as among many other ancient nations, was confined to certain families, and deſcended from father to ſon [8]. The Heathen Danes and Saxons had alſo prieſteſſes, who officiated in the temples of their female deities; and Frigga, their chief goddeſs, was ſerved by kings daughters and ladies of the higheſt ranks [9].

Their power and honours.

The Germans, as we are aſſured by Cæſar, were not ſuch bigots as the Gauls and Britons, but rather a little lukewarm in religious matters; and in conſequence of this, their prieſts did not enjoy ſo many honours, nor accumulate ſo much wealth, as the Druids [10]. We hear nothing of the Daniſh or Saxon prieſts acting the part of legiſlators and ſupreme judges among theſe haughty nations, obliging the greateſt kings, and moſt powerful ſtates, to ſubmit to their deciſions. The chief prieſt of the Northumbrians complained bitterly, that he had reaped very little honour or advantage from all his devotions to the gods; which made him ſuſpect, that the gods whom he worſhipped had no power to reward their votaries. "There is not "one of your ſubjects (ſaid this high-prieſt to "king Edwin) who hath ſerved the gods with "ſo much devotion as I have done; and yet "there are many of them who have received "more ample rewards and greater honours, and

8 Mallet, Introduc. Hiſt. Denmark, c. 7.

9 Cæſar de Bel. Gal. l. 6. 10 Id. ibid.

"have

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" have prospered much better in all their affairs. If these gods had any power, would " they not exert it in my favour, who have " worshipped them with so much zeal[11]?" Tacitus indeed acquaints us, that certain priests of the god of war attended the armies of the ancient Germans, and flogged the soldiers when they committed any crime[12]. But this was certainly no very honourable, and probably no very lucrative office. The Danish and Saxon priests were not only exempted from war, but even prohibited to appear in arms, or so much as to mount a horse[13]. But this must be considered as a mark of disrespect rather than of honour, as riding and wearing arms were the most honourable badges of distinction among those warlike nations. Their priestesses enjoyed much greater authority and higher honours among the ancient Germans, and their posterity in this island, than their priests. Some of these consecrated females were consulted as infallible oracles, and almost worshipped as divinities[14]; but this was as much owing to their gallantry, and the high opinion they entertained of the fair sex in general, as to their devotion.

Their doctrines better known than those of the Druids.

The religious principles of the ancient Germans, Danes, and other northern nations, are said to have been originally very pure and ra-

[11] Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 2. c. 13.
[12] Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 7.
[13] Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 2. c. 13.
[14] Cluver. German. Antiq. p. 165.

tional;

tional; but, like thoſe of other Heathen nations, were gradually corrupted by the invention of many abſurd and extravagant fables. Theſe principles, however, are better known than thoſe of many other nations of antiquity; becauſe their prieſts did not affect that myſterious ſecrecy which was obſerved by the Druids and other ancient prieſts; and a very curious ſyſtem of their fabulous theology, called the *Edda*, hath lately been preſented to the public in the Engliſh language[15]. To this ſyſtem we muſt refer ſuch of our readers as are not ſatisfied with the following very brief abſtract of their religious principles. Cent. V.

The ancient Germans, Danes, and other northern nations, were not unacquainted with the great doctrine of one Supreme Deity; "the author of every thing that exiſteth; the eternal, "the ancient, the living and awful being; the "ſearcher into concealed things; the being that "never changeth; who liveth and governeth "during the ages, directeth every thing which "is high, and every thing which is low[16]." Of this glorious being, they eſteemed it impious to make any viſible repreſentation, or to imagine it poſſible that he could be confined within the walls of temples[17]. But theſe great truths had been in ſome meaſure loſt and corrupted by the introduction of a multiplicity of gods and Their religious principles.

[15] See Northern Antiquities, vol. 2.
[16] Mallet Introduct. Hiſt. Den. c. 5.
[17] Tacit. de Mor. German. c. 9.

images,

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images, before the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons and Danes in England, as will by and by appear. The Saxon and Daniſh prieſts believed and taught the immortality of the human ſoul, and a ſtate of rewards and puniſhments after death; rejecting the Druidical doctrine of the tranſmigration of ſouls as an abſurd fiction [18]. The place of rewards they called *Valhalla*, where the heroes ſpent the day in martial ſports, and the night in feaſting on the fleſh of the boar ſcrimner, and drinking large draughts of beer or mead out of the ſculls of their enemies whom they had ſlain in battle, preſented to them by beautiful young virgins, who waited upon them at table [19]. The place of puniſhment they called *Niflheim*, or, *The Abode of Evil*, where Hela dwelt; whoſe palace was *Anguiſh*, her table *Famine*, her waiters *Expectation* and *Delay*, the threſhold of her door *Precipice*, her bed *Leanneſs*, and her looks ſtruck *terror* into all beholders [20]. In the former of thoſe places, all brave and good men, and in the latter, all cowards and bad men, were to reſide to the end of this world, when the heavens and the earth, and even the gods themſelves, were to be conſumed by fire [21]. After this general conflagration, a new and more glorious world was to ariſe out of the aſhes of the former; the heroes, with all good and juſt men, were to be admitted into

[18] Mallet Introduct. c. 6. Keyſler Antiq. Septent. p. 117.
[19] Id. ibid. [20] Id. ibid.
[21] Edda Iſland, fable 23.

Gimle,

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Gimle, a palace built of ſhining gold, far more beautiful than Valhalla; and cowards, aſſaſſins, falſe ſwearers, and adulterers, were to be confined in Naſtrande, a place built of the carcaſes of ſerpents, far more diſmal than Niflheim [22]. The moral precepts which were moſt inculcated by the Saxon and Daniſh prieſts, were theſe three;—To worſhip the gods,—To do no wrong,—and, To fight bravely in battle [23]. Their knowledge in morality, however, was not confined to theſe three heads, but they occaſionally recommended many other virtues; and it will not be eaſy to find, among compoſitions merely human, a more beautiful collection of prudential and moral maxims than in the Hovamaal, or ſublime diſcourſe, aſcribed to Odin, the chief deity of the Heathen Danes and Saxons [24].

Their gods. Odin.

Odin is believed to have been the name of the one true God among the firſt colonies who came from the eaſt, and peopled Germany and Scandinavia, and among their poſterity for ſeveral ages [25]. But at length a mighty conqueror, the leader of a new army of adventurers from the eaſt, over-run the north of Europe, erected a great empire, aſſumed the name of *Odin*, and claimed the honours which had been formerly paid to that deity [26]. From thenceforward this

22 Mallet, c. 5. 23 Keyſler Antiq. Septent. p. 124, &c.
24 See Northern Antiquities, v. 2. p. 206.
25 Cluver. Ger. Antiq. p. 183. Mallet Introduct. c. 6.
26 Id. ibid.

deified

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deified mortal, under the name of *Odin* or *Wodin*, became the chief object of the idolatrous worſhip of the Saxons and Danes in this iſland, as well as of many other nations. Having been a mighty and ſucceſsful warrior, he was believed to be the god of war, who gave victory, and revived courage in the conflict[27]. Having civilized, in ſome meaſure, the countries which he conquered, and introduced arts formerly unknown, he was alſo worſhipped as the god of arts and artiſts. In a word, to this Odin his deluded worſhippers impiouſly aſcribed all the attributes which belong only to the true God: to him they built magnificent temples, offered many ſacrifices, and conſecrated the fourth day of the week, which is ſtill called by his name in England, and in all the other countries where he was formerly worſhipped[28]. Notwithſtanding all this, the founders of all the kingdoms of the Anglo-Saxon heptarchy pretended to be deſcended from Wodin, and ſome of them at the diſtance only of a few generations[29].

The goddeſs Frea.

Next to Odin, Frea, or Frigga, his wife, was the moſt revered divinity among the Heathen Saxons, Danes, and other northern nations. As Odin was believed to be the father, Frea was eſteemed the mother of all the other gods[30]. In the moſt ancient times, Frea was the ſame

27 Edda Iſland, fable 10. 28 Id. ibid.
29 Chron. Saxon. p. 13. 15. 19, 20. 25. 69. 77.
30 Edda, fable 10.

with

with the goddeſs Herthus, or Earth, who was ſo devoutly worſhipped by the Angli and other German nations[31]. But when Odin, the conqueror of the north, uſurped the honours due only to the true Odin, his wife Frea uſurped thoſe which had been formerly paid to mother Earth. She was worſhipped as the goddeſs of love and pleaſure, who beſtowed on her votaries a variety of delights, particularly happy marriages and eaſy child-births[32]. To Frea the ſixth day of the week was conſecrated, which ſtill bears her name. Cent. V.

Thor, the eldeſt and braveſt of the ſons of Odin and Frea, was, after his parents, the greateſt god of the Saxons and Danes while they continued Heathens. They believed, that Thor reigned over all the aërial regions, which compoſed his immenſe palace, conſiſting of five hundred and forty halls; that he launched the thunder, pointed the lightning, and directed the meteors, winds, and ſtorms[33]. To him they addreſſed their prayers for favourable winds, refreſhing rains, and fruitful ſeaſons; and to him the fifth day of the week, which ſtill bears his name, was conſecrated. Thor.

Beſides theſe three greateſt divinities, the Saxons and Danes had a prodigious number of inferior gods and goddeſſes, to whom they paid ſome kind of religious homage. Of theſe it Inferior deities.

31 Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 40. 32 Mallet, Introduct. c. 6.
33 Edda, fable 11.

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will be sufficient to name a few. Balder, the second son of Odin and Frea, was the god of light; Niord, the god of waters; Tyr, the god of champions; Brage, the god of orators and poets; and Heimdal was the door-keeper of the gods, and the guardian of the rainbow [34]. A malevolent, cunning, and powerful spirit, named *Loke*, was by some esteemed a god, by others an enemy both to gods and men, by all an object of many superstitious terrors [35]. Frea and Odin had eleven daughters, who were all goddesses, viz. Eira, the goddess of medicine; Gefione, of virginity; Fulla, of dress; Freya, of true love; Lofna, of reconciliation; Vara, of vows; Snotra, of good manners; Gna, the messenger of Frea, &c. [36]. In a word, all the nations of the north, and amongst others the Danes and Saxons, believed that the sun, moon, stars, air, earth, sea, rivers, lakes, woods, mountains, &c. were inhabited and ruled by certain genii, who were capable of doing much good or much hurt to mankind; and on that account were intitled to some degree of veneration [37]. Such were the vain imaginary deities our unhappy ancestors, in the times of darkness, worshipped. It now only remains to inquire, what were the various acts, and other circumstances, of that worship.

34 Mallet, Introduct. c. 6.

35 Id. ibid.

36 Id. ibid.

37 Id. c. 5.

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Rites of worſhip.

The acts of worſhip paid to their gods by the Heathen Danes and Saxons were theſe four; ſongs of praiſe and thankſgiving,—prayers and ſupplications,—offerings and ſacrifices,—incantations, and rites of divination; in order to—expreſs their admiration of their perfections, and gratitude for their benefits,—to obtain thoſe bleſſings from them which they deſired;—to appeaſe their diſpleaſure, and gain their love,—and to penetrate into their deſigns.

Songs of praiſe.

Mankind have been always apt to form their ideas of the diſpoſitions of the deities whom they worſhipped, from thoſe which they felt in their own boſoms. Conſcious that nothing was more ſoothing to themſelves than the voice of praiſe, expreſſions of gratitude and admiration; theſe they conſtantly offered to the objects of their worſhip. The ſongs of praiſe compoſed in honour of Odin, and ſung at the ſolemnities of his worſhip, were almoſt innumerable; and in thoſe ſongs, no fewer than one hundred and twenty-ſix honourable epithets were beſtowed on that god [38]. All the other gods and goddeſſes had many ſongs compoſed and ſung in their praiſe, with a number of epithets, in proportion to the powers aſcribed to them, and the degrees of veneration in which they were held by their worſhippers [39].

38 Northern Antiquities, v. 2. p. 189.

39 Id. ibid. Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 2.

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Prayers.

Prayers conſtituted a very conſiderable part of the worſhip which the Pagan Danes and Saxons paid to their divinities; and it was one of the chief functions of their prieſts, to inſtruct them in the powers and properties of their ſeveral gods and goddeſſes, and in the prayers which they were to make to them according to their reſpective powers. To Odin they were directed to pray for victory in battle; to Frigga, for ſucceſs in love and courtſhip; to Thor, to avert his thunderbolts from themſelves, and point them againſt their enemies; to Niord, for proſperous voyages and ſucceſs in fiſhing; to Freya, for favourable ſeaſons and plentiful crops, &c.[40]. They boaſted much of their exact knowledge of the attributes and functions of their ſeveral gods, and of the prayers that were to be put up to each of them; and to this they aſcribed their proſperity and ſucceſs in their undertakings[41]. But when they did not obtain a favourable anſwer to their prayers, they were not afraid to teſtify their diſpleaſure againſt their gods, by ſhooting their arrows and throwing their darts towards heaven[42].

Sacrifices.

The Danes and Saxons were not ſparing of their offerings and ſacrifices, to gain the favour and appeaſe the anger of their gods; and it was another branch of the duty of their prieſts to

40 Edda Iſland, Fable 12, 13.

41 Id. ibid.

42 Olai Magni Hiſt. l. 3. c. 9.

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inſtruct them what kind of oblations were moſt acceptable to their ſeveral deities. To Odin they taught the people to ſacrifice horſes, dogs, and falcons, and on ſome occaſions cocks, and a fat bull, being all brave and fierce animals; to Frigga the largeſt hogs; and to Thor fat oxen and horſes[43]. Theſe victims were ſlain before the altar, their blood received into a veſſel prepared for that purpoſe, and ſome part of it ſprinkled on the aſſembly: the intrails were inſpected by the prieſts, to diſcover the will of the gods from their appearances: ſome of the fleſh was burnt on the altar, and on the reſt the prieſts and people feaſted[44]. At theſe feaſts, their favourite liquors, beer and ale, were not forgotten; of which they drank deep and frequent draughts to the honour of their gods, putting up ſome wiſh or prayer at every draught. In times of famine, or other national calamities, or at the eve of ſome dangerous war, the Danes and Saxons, as well as other Heathen nations, offered human ſacrifices to their gods, believing them to be more acceptable than any other. Theſe unhappy victims were commonly choſen from among criminals, captives, or ſlaves; but on ſome preſſing occaſions, perſons of the higheſt dignity were not ſpared[45].

Divination.

No nations in the world were more addicted to divination, or made greater efforts to pene-

43 Mallet, Introduct. c. 7.
44 Id. ibid.
45 Id. ibid.

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trate into futurity, and discover the counsels of heaven, than the ancient Danes and Saxons. Besides those arts of divination practised by their priests, in common with those of other nations, they had many others peculiar to themselves, which may be seen in the authors quoted below [46]. They gave great credit to the predictions of certain old women, who pretended to consult the dead, to converse with familiar spirits, and to have many other ways of discovering the will of the gods, and the issue of important undertakings. Some of these women became so famous for their responses, that they were consulted by the greatest states as infallible oracles, and even revered as goddesses, who, if they had lived a few ages later, would have been burnt for witches [47].

Their temples.

In very ancient times, the Saxons, Danes, and other northern nations, had no covered temples, but worshipped their gods in sacred groves and circles of rude stones. By degrees, however, they began to build temples, in imitation of other nations, and at length erected some of incredible grandeur and magnificence [48]. In each of these temples there was a chapel, which was esteemed the most holy place, where the images

46 Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 9, 10. Cluver. Antiq. Ger. l. 1. c. 36. Keysler Antiq. Septent. p. 323, &c. Northern Antiquities, vol. 1. c. 7.

47 Tacit. de Morib. Ger. c. 8. Cæsar Bel. Gal. l. 1. c. 50. Keysler, p. 59.

48 Olai Magni Hist. l. 3. c. 6.

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of the gods were ſet upon a kind of altar; before which ſtood another altar, plated with iron, for the holy fire, which burnt perpetually; and near it a vaſe for receiving the blood of the victims, and a bruſh for ſprinkling it upon the people [49].

Images.

About the ſame time that the Danes, Saxons, and other northern nations, began to build temples, they began alſo to ſet up the ſtatues or images of their gods in theſe temples. The image of Odin was crowned, and completely armed, with a drawn ſword in his right hand; that of Frigga was an hermaphrodite, a bow in one hand, and a ſword in the other; that of Thor was crowned with ſtars, and armed with a ponderous club; and thoſe of the other gods had emblems ſuited to their reſpective attributes [50]. There were many ſuch temples adorned with idols in different parts of England, while the Anglo-Saxons continued Heathens; but they were all deſtroyed at their converſion to Chriſtianity [51].

Feſtivals.

Though the ſacred fire was kept perpetually burning, and ſacrifices were frequently, perhaps daily, offered in the temples of the Danes and Saxons; yet there were certain great feſtivals that were celebrated with peculiar ſolemnity. One of the greateſt of theſe feſtivals was cele-

49 Mallet, vol. 1. c. 7.

50 Mallet, Introduct. c. 7. Verſtegan's Reſtitution, &c. c. 3.

51 Bedæ Hiſt. Eccl. l. 2. c. 13.

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brated at the winter ſolſtice, which was the Mother Night, both on account of this feſtival, and of its being the beginning of the Anglo-Saxon year. This feaſt was alſo called *Iule*, a name by which the Chriſtian feſtival of Chriſtmas, obſerved about the ſame ſeaſon of the year, is ſtill known in many parts of Scotland, and in ſome parts of England. The Heathen Iule was celebrated in honour of the god Thor, not only with ſacrifices, but with feaſting, drinking, dancing, and every poſſible expreſſion of mirth and joy [52]. The ſecond great feſtival was kept during the firſt quarter of the ſecond moon of the year, in honour of the goddeſs Frea, much in the ſame manner with the former [53]. The third and greateſt feſtival was celebrated in honour of Odin, in the beginning of the ſpring, before they ſet out on their warlike expeditions, in order to obtain victory from that god of battles. Beſides theſe three great feſtivals, in honour of their three greateſt gods, they kept many others, at different ſeaſons, in honour of their inferior deities [54].

Differences between the Paganiſm of the Saxons and Danes, and that of the ancient Britons.

Such was the vain, abſurd, and cruel ſuperſtition which reigned in all thoſe parts of England poſſeſſed by the Saxons and Danes before their converſion to Chriſtianity. The intelligent reader muſt obſerve, that though it bore a general reſemblance in ſeveral particulars to the Druidiſm of the ancient Britons, it differed from it greatly

52 Mallet, c. 7. 53 Id. ibid. 54 Id. ibid.

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in not a few reſpects. The Saxon and Daniſh prieſts were neither held in ſuch profound veneration, nor enjoyed ſo much power, eſpecially in civil affairs, as the Druids: their ſpeculative opinions in many things were very different; as were alſo the objects, the ſeaſons, and ceremonies, of their worſhip.

Church-hiſtory of the Britons, Scots, and Picts, imperfect.

In the period between the arrival and the converſion of the Saxons, the Chriſtian religion was profeſſed by all the other nations of Britain, except the northern Picts, among whom it was alſo introduced by the famous St. Columba, A. D. 565[55]. It muſt, however, be confeſſed, that the church-hiſtory of the Britons, Scots, and Picts, is very imperfect in this period; either becauſe their clergy in thoſe calamitous times had no leiſure to write memoirs of their tranſactions, or becauſe thoſe memoirs have been loſt.

Church-hiſtory of the Britons.

After the departure of Germanus, the Britiſh churches were governed with great prudence, and preſerved from the contagion of hereſy, by ſome of his diſciples. Among theſe, Dubritius and Iltutus were moſt diſtinguiſhed for their learning, as well as for their zeal and piety. Dubritius was firſt biſhop of Landaff, and afterwards archbiſhop of Caerleon; and had the chief direction of two ſchools for the education of young perſons for the ſervice of the church[56]. Iltutus preſided over a famous ſeminary of learn-

55 Bed. Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 3. c. 4.

56 Uſſer. Primord. Brit. Eccleſ. p. 445.

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ing, at a place which, from him, is ſtill called *Lantuet*, or, *The church of Iltut*, in Glamorganſhire [57]. In theſe academies many excellent perſons, who arrived at the higheſt dignities in the church, both at home and abroad, received their education; as Samſon archbiſhop of Dol in Bretagne; St. Magloire, his ſucceſſor in that ſee; Maclovius biſhop of St. Malo; Daniel biſhop of Bangor; St. Theleau biſhop of Landaff; St. David biſhop of Menevia; and many others [58]. The Britiſh churches, therefore, amidſt all the calamities of this period, flouriſhed conſiderably both in piety and learning, under the miniſtry of Iltutus, Dubritius, their pupils and ſucceſſors. It cannot be denied indeed, that Gildas, who flouriſhed in thoſe times, hath left a very diſmal picture of the ignorance and irreligion of the Britiſh clergy. But Gildas was evidently a man of a querulous and gloomy temper, who painted every thing in the moſt unfavourable colours; and many of the clergy were probably far inferior to the eminent perſons named above in ſanctity or knowledge [59].

Britiſh councils.

Several Britiſh ſynods were aſſembled in this period; but we know very little with certainty of their tranſactions. Some of theſe ſeem to have been mixed aſſemblies of the moſt conſiderable men both in church and ſtate, for regulating civil as well as eccleſiaſtical affairs [60].

57 Leland. Collect. v. 2. p. 42.
58 Godwin de Præſul. Angliæ, p. 600. 617.
59 Gild. Epiſt.
60 Spelman. Concil. vol. 1. p. 60, 61.

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In one of these mixed assemblies, A. D. 465, king Vortigern is said to have been dethroned, and Ambrosius chosen king; in another, A. D. 512, Dubritius was translated from Landaff to Caerleon, and St. Theleau appointed bishop of Landaff in his room; and in a third, A. D. 516, the famous king Arthur was crowned, and his uncle St. David appointed archbishop of Caerleon; who soon after removed the seat of his see to Menevia, which was afterwards, from him, called *St. David's*[61]. This celebrated archbishop held an ecclesiastical synod of all the British clergy, A. D. 519, for extirpating the remains, and preventing the revival, of the Pelagian heresy. Oudocius bishop of Landaff held three provincial synods of the clergy of his diocese, for inflicting the censures of the church against certain powerful delinquents. But the transactions of those synods reflect very little honour on the British princes or clergy concerned in them; as they shew the former to have been guilty of the most horrid acts of perfidy and cruelty, and the latter to have been ready enough to accept of liberal donations to the church, as the most solid evidences of their repentance[62]. Cent. V.

The church-history of the Scots and Picts, in this period, is even more imperfect than that of the Britons. A few years before the arrival of the Saxons, Palladius, a Greek by birth, is said to have been ordained a bishop by Celestine bishop Church-history of the Scots and Picts.

[61] Spelman. Concil. vol. 1. p. 60, 61. [62] Id. ibid.

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of Rome, and sent to the Scots who believed in Christ [63]. One chief design of this mission seems to have been, to preserve the Christian Scots from the infection of the Pelagian heresy, which was so zealously propagated by their countryman Celestius. It is not certainly known how long Palladius continued among the Scots, nor who succeeded him in the direction of their ecclesiastical affairs; though it is unquestionable, that there must have been a considerable interval between his departure or death and the arrival of the famous St. Columba from Ireland, about the middle of the sixth century [64]. This extraordinary person soon gained so great an ascendant, both over princes and people, that he became a kind of dictator among the Scots and Picts, in civil as well as religious matters, for more than thirty years [65]. Having obtained a grant of the small island Hii, one of the Ebudæ, he there built a monastery, which was long considered as the mother and queen of all the monasteries in Scotland; and its abbots, though only presbyters, were respected as the chief ecclesiastical persons among the Scots, out of regard to its founder St. Columba, who was a presbyter, and not a bishop [66]. In this monastery many excellent persons received their education, and were sent from thence, not only to instruct the Scots and Picts, but even to convert the Saxons, as we shall see in the next section.

63 Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 1. c. 13.
64 Id. l. 3. c. 4.
65 Adamnan. Vita St. Columb.
66 Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 3. c. 4.

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We know of no very remarkable change that happened in the doctrine, discipline, or worship, of the British churches, between the arrival and conversion of the Saxons; those of the south still adhering to the Gallic ritual, which had been introduced among them by St. Germanus bishop of Auxere, and those of the north to that which had been introduced by their first instructors.

SECTION II.

The history of religion in Great Britain, from the arrival of Austin, A. D. 596, *to* A. D. 700.

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Circumstances which paved the way for the introduction of Christianity.

THE Saxons, at their coming into Britain, were not only Pagans, but they were animated with the most violent hatred against Christianity. This appeared by their murdering the Christian clergy without mercy, and destroying their places of worship, whenever they fell into their hands [1]. Their enmity against the Christian religion was kept alive, and even more inflamed, by their long and bloody contests with the Britons, who were Christians. But when the fierceness of these contests abated, and they began to make treaties of peace, and form alliances, with the ancient inhabitants of the country, and with other Christians, their animosity against the Christian religion gradually diminished, they

[1] Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 1. c. 15.

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became better acquainted with it, and looked upon it with a more favourable eye. The marriage of Ethelbert king of Kent, A. D. 570, with Birtha, daughter of Cherebert king of France, a Chriſtian princeſs of great virtue and merit, contributed not a little to abate the prejudices of that prince and his ſubjects againſt her religion; for the free exerciſe of which ſhe had made ſtipulations in the marriage-contract [2]. For this purpoſe, ſhe was allowed the uſe of a ſmall church without the walls of Canterbury, where Luidhart, a French biſhop, who came over in her retinue, with other clergymen, publicly performed all the rites of the Chriſtian worſhip [3]. By theſe, and other means, many of the Anglo-Saxons, particularly in the kingdom of Kent, were brought to entertain ſo favourable an opinion of the Chriſtian religion, that they were very deſirous of being better inſtructed in its principles [4].

Arrival and ſucceſs of Auſtin and his companions.

When the Anglo-Saxons were thus diſpoſed to give the goſpel a fair hearing, Providence provided them with inſtructors. St. Gregory (who was advanced to the papal chair A. D. 590), prompted by his zeal for religion, and having his compaſſion excited by the ſight of ſome beautiful Engliſh youths expoſed to ſale in the ſtreets of Rome, reſolved to attempt the converſion of their countrymen, who, he was told, were ſtill

2 Bed. Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 1. c. 25.
3 Id. ibid.
4 Gregor. Epiſt. l. 5. epiſt. 58, 59.

Heathens [5]. With this view, he appointed Auſtin, or Auguſtin, a monk of the convent of St. Andrew's at Rome, with forty other monks, to go into England, and endeavour to bring the people of that country to the knowledge and profeſſion of Chriſtianity [6]. Theſe miſſionaries accordingly ſet out on their journey; but before they proceeded far, beginning to reflect on the great diſtance of the country, the ferocious character of its inhabitants, and their own ignorance of the language of thoſe they were appointed to inſtruct, they made a ſtop, and ſent back Auſtin their leader, to repreſent theſe difficulties to St. Gregory, and obtain his permiſſion for their return to Rome. But Gregory rejected their requeſt, and ſent them by Auſtin an animating letter, exhorting them to deſpiſe all dangers and difficulties, and proceed boldly in their glorious undertaking, for which they would obtain an immortal reward in heaven [7]. By the ſame meſſenger, he furniſhed them with letters of recommendation to the king, queen, and ſeveral biſhops of France; who received them kindly, and provided them with all neceſſaries, particularly with interpreters, who underſtood the language of the Anglo-Saxons, which was then nearly the ſame with that of the Franks [8]. Thus encouraged and provided, Auſtin, with his companions, ſailed from France A. D. 596,

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5 Bed. Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 1. c. 23. l. 2. c. 1.
6 Id. ibid.
7 Gregor. Epiſt. l. 4. epiſt. 57.
8 Id. l. 5. epiſt. 54. Bed. l. 1. c. 23, 24.

and

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and landed in the isle of Thanet; from whence they immediately dispatched one of their interpreters, to acquaint king Ethelbert with the news and design of their coming. That prince soon after gave them an audience in the open air; and having heard their message, replied, that he could not without further consideration abandon the religion of his ancestors; but as they had come so far on a friendly errand, he assigned them a place of residence in the city of Canterbury, and allowed them to use their best endeavours to convert his subjects [9]. The missionaries having thus obtained the royal licence, entered the city of Canterbury in solemn procession; carrying before them the picture of Christ, and a silver cross, and singing the following hymn: "We beseech thee, O Lord! of thy mercy let "thy wrath and anger be turned away from this "city, and from thy holy place; for we have "sinned. Hallelujah!" In this manner they proceeded to the place of their residence, and immediately entered on the labours of their mission; which were crowned with such success, that in a very short time the king, and great multitudes of his subjects, were converted; of whom Austin baptized no fewer than ten thousand on Christmas day [10]. Things bearing this favourable aspect, Austin made a journey into France; and was there, by the archbishop of

9 Bed. l. 1. c. 25.

10 Gervas. Act. Pontific. Cant. apud decem script. col. 1632.

Arles,

Arles, consecrated archbishop of the English, hoping that this new dignity would give additional influence to his exhortations [11]. About the same time he dispatched two of his companions to Rome, to acquaint St. Gregory with the joyful tidings of the conversion of the English; and with them he sent several questions in writing, to which he desired answers, for the regulation of his future conduct [12]. Some of these questions are so trifling, and others so indelicate, that it would be very improper to insert a translation of them in this place: they may be found at full length, with St. Gregory's answers, in the authors quoted below [13]. Cent. VI.

Gregory received the news of Austin's success in England with great joy; and resolving to neglect nothing in his power to render it still greater, he sent back his messengers, and with them Mellitus, Justus, Paulinus, and several others, to assist in propagating the knowledge of the gospel among the English. With these new missionaries he sent recommendatory letters to several princes and bishops of France, and to the king and queen of Kent, with certain prudential admonitions to Austin, a model for the government of the church of England, and a valuable present of books, vestments, sacred utensils, and holy relics [14]. One of the advices which Gre- Cent. VII. New missionaries, &c. sent to England.

[11] Bed. Hist. l. 1. c. 27. [12] Id. ibid.
[13] Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 1. c. 27. Spelman. Con. tom. 1. p. 95.
[14] Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 1. c. 28—33. Spelman. Con. t. 1. p. 81—105.

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gory gave to Auſtin was, Not to deſtroy the Heathen temples of the Engliſh, but only to remove the images of their gods, to waſh the walls with holy water, to erect altars, and depoſit relics in them, and ſo convert them into Chriſtian churches; not only to ſave the expence of building new ones, but that the people might be more eaſily prevailed upon to frequent thoſe places of worſhip to which they had been accuſtomed. He directs him further, to accommodate the ceremonies of the Chriſtian worſhip, as much as poſſible, to thoſe of the Heathen, that the people might not be much ſtartled at the change; and in particular, he adviſes him to allow the Chriſtian converts, on certain feſtivals, to kill and eat a great number of oxen to the glory of God, as they had formerly done to the honour of the devil[15]. Theſe admonitions, which were but too well obſerved, introduced the groſſeſt corruptions into the Chriſtian worſhip, and ſhew how much the apoſtles of the ſixth and ſeventh centuries had departed from the ſimplicity and ſincerity of thoſe of the firſt.

St. Gregory's model of government for the church of England.

Though Gregory's model for the government of the church of England was never put in execution, the following very brief account of it may not be unacceptable. In a letter to Auſtin, with which he ſent him the pall (an ornament peculiar to metropolitans), he directs him to ordain twelve biſhops in his own province of

[15] Bed. l. 1. c. 30.

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Canterbury; to ſend a biſhop to York; and as ſoon as the Engliſh in the north were converted, to ordain twelve other biſhops in thoſe parts as ſuffragans to the ſee of York, to whoſe biſhop he would then ſend the pall. He ordains, that as long as Auſtin lived he ſhould enjoy the primacy over all the biſhops of both provinces, as well as over all the Britiſh biſhops; but that after his death, the metropolitical ſee ſhould be removed from Canterbury to London; and that from thenceforward, the archbiſhops of London and York ſhould have precedency, according to the ſeniority of their conſecrations[16]. But though theſe directions might have great influence on Auſtin and his clergy who had come from Rome, they were ſo little regarded by the Engliſh, and ſo reſolutely oppoſed by the Britons, that they were never executed. Cent. VII.

Auſtin's attempts to ſubject the Britiſh churches to his authority.

Auſtin, who ſeems to have been naturally vain enough, was much elated by thoſe marks of diſtinction which he received from Rome, and laboured with great earneſtneſs to eſtabliſh his metropolitical authority over the Britiſh churches. With this view, he held two councils with the Britiſh biſhops and clergy; in which he propoſed to them, that if they would acknowledge him for their metropolitan; conform to the church of Rome in the time of keeping Eaſter, and the manner of adminiſtering baptiſm; and join with the Roman clergy in preaching to the Engliſh,

[16] Bed. l. 1. c. 29.

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he would bear with them in other things [17]. But the Britons, ſtrongly attached to their own ancient cuſtoms, and greatly irritated at the pride of Auſtin, who did not ſo much as riſe from his ſeat to receive them at their coming into council, rejected all his propoſals; which put this meek apoſtle into ſo violent a paſſion, that he threatened them with the wrath of Heaven, and the hoſtilities of the Engliſh [18]. What influence this good man had in drawing down the wrath of Heaven on the unhappy Britons, it is not ſo eaſy to determine; but we have good reaſon to ſuſpect, that he had but too much hand in kindling the flames of war which ſoon after broke out between them and their ancient enemies the Engliſh, and involved them in very great calamities.

Auſtin conſecrates biſhops, and dies.

Auſtin, after he had failed in his attempts of reducing the Britiſh churches under his authority, applied himſelf to enlarge and regulate the church of England. He conſecrated Juſtus to be biſhop of Rocheſter, Mellitus to be biſhop of the Eaſt-Saxons, and Laurentius to be his own ſucceſſor in the ſee of Canterbury [19]. Theſe conſecrations were performed A. D. 604; and Auſtin died either that year or the year after, leaving the knowledge and profeſſion of Chriſtianity among the Engliſh confined within the narrow limits of the little kingdom of Kent [20].

[17] Bed. l. 2. c. 2. Spel. Con. t. 1. p. 104.
[18] Id. ibid.
[19] Id. l. 2. c. 3.
[20] Anglia Sacra, t. 1. p. 91.

Lauren-

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Laurentius, the ſucceſſor of Auſtin, made a new effort to bring the Britiſh Chriſtians to adopt the uſages of the church of Rome, by writing paſtoral letters both to them and to the Scots, earneſtly intreating them to conform to the rites of the Roman church, particularly as to the time of keeping Eaſter [21]. But theſe letters made no impreſſion on thoſe to whom they were addreſſed.

Laurentius ſucceeds Auſtin.

Mellitus was more ſucceſsful in his endeavours to convert the Eaſt-Saxons, who inhabited the countries of Eſſex and Middleſex, and were under the immediate government of Seber, ſiſter's ſon to Ethelbert king of Kent, to whom he was tributary. That prince, by the preaching of Mellitus, and the influence of his royal uncle, was perſuaded to embrace the Chriſtian religion; in which he was imitated by ſo many of his ſubjects, that a biſhop's ſee was eſtabliſhed at London, which was then the capital of that little ſtate [22]. Mellitus, the firſt biſhop of this ſee, made a journey to Rome A. D. 610, to conſult with Boniface IV. who then filled the papal chair, about the affairs of the church of England, and was preſent at a council which was then celebrated in that city; and at his return brought with him the decrees of that council, together with letters from the pope to Ethelbert king of Kent, and Laurentius archbiſhop of Canterbury [23].

Mellitus converts the kingdom of Eſſex.

[21] Bed. Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 2. c. 4. [22] Id. l. 2. c. 3.
[23] Id. l. 2. c. 4.

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Apoſtaſy of the Engliſh, and their recovery.

Not long after the return of Mellitus from Rome, the infant church of England was involved in very great calamities, and threatened with total ruin. For Ethelbert king of Kent dying February 24, A. D. 616, his ſon and ſucceſſor Eadbald married his father's widow, and renounced Chriſtianity, which did not tolerate ſuch inceſtuous marriages; and his defection occaſioned the apoſtaſy of the greateſt part of his ſubjects[24]. Seber, king of the Eaſt-Saxons, did not long ſurvive his uncle, but dying that ſame year, was ſucceeded by his three ſons; who having never been Chriſtians, reſtored the Pagan worſhip in their dominions, and obliged Mellitus to retire into Kent[25].

Here the three biſhops, Laurentius, Juſtus, and Mellitus, held a conſultation concerning the preſent poſture of affairs; and being of opinion, that the cauſe of Chriſtianity among the Engliſh was deſperate, they reſolved to retire into France, and reſerve themſelves for better times. In conſequence of this reſolution, Juſtus and Mellitus actually departed; but while Laurentius was preparing to follow them, Eadbald king of Kent, ſtruck with remorſe for his criminal conduct, repudiated his mother-in-law, returned to the profeſſion of Chriſtianity, and encouraged Laurentius to reſume the duties of his office, and invite his brethren to return; who accordingly came back about a year after their departure.

24 Bed. Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 2. c. 5. 25 Id. ibid.

Juſtus

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Juſtus was reſtored to the ſee of Rocheſter; but the Eaſt-Saxons continuing in their apoſtaſy, Mellitus did not recover his biſhopric of London [26]. However, Laurentius archbiſhop of Canterbury dying A. D. 619, Mellitus was advanced to the archiepiſcopal chair; in which he ſat about ſix years, and was ſucceeded by Juſtus biſhop of Rocheſter A. D. 624 [27].

Converſion of the Northumbrians.

About this time an event happened that paved the way for the further propagation of the goſpel in England. This was the marriage of Edwin king of Northumberland to Edelburga, daughter of Ethelbert king of Kent; who being a Chriſtian princeſs, had the free exerciſe of the Chriſtian religion ſecured to her and her houſehold; and Paulinus being conſecrated a biſhop by Juſtus, accompanied her into Northumberland [28]. This prelate was not only allowed to perform the duties of his ſacred function in the queen's family, but to preach the goſpel to as many as were willing to hear it. His labours for ſome time were not very ſucceſsful; but king Edwin, who was a wiſe and great prince, having, after long conſideration, and many conſultations with his council, embraced the Chriſtian religion, his example was followed by Coiffi the high-prieſt, and many of his nobility, and great multitudes of the common people [29]. Paulinus commonly followed the court, which reſided

26 Bed. Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 2. c. 5. 27 Godwin de Præſul. Ang. p. 58.
28 Bed. l. 2. c. 9. 29 Id. c. 14.

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ſometimes in Bernicia and ſometimes in Deira, preaching, and baptizing his converts in ſome neighbouring ſtream or fountain. The crowds of theſe converts at length became ſo great, that Paulinus is ſaid to have baptized no fewer than twelve thouſand in one day in the river Swale [30]. By the influence of Edwin, and the miniſtry of Paulinus, Carpwald king of the Eaſt-Angles, and many of his ſubjects, particularly in Lincolnſhire, were converted [31]. To reward theſe mighty ſervices, Edwin erected a biſhop's ſee at York for Paulinus, and even obtained an archbiſhop's pall for him from pope Honorius [32].

Apoſtaſy of the Northumbrians.

But when things bore this favourable aſpect, the church of Northumberland was almoſt entirely ruined in a moment, by the deplorable fall of the great king Edwin and his army in battle A. D. 633 [33]. The apoſtaſy of the Northumbrians was ſo general, and the diſtractions of their country ſo great after that fatal event, that Paulinus found himſelf obliged to abandon his ſcattered flock, and retire into Kent, where he was appointed biſhop of Rocheſter.

Honorius archbiſhop of Canterbury.

Juſtus archbiſhop of Canterbury dying A. D. 633, he was ſucceeded by Honorius, a diſciple of St. Gregory, who was conſecrated by Paulinus at Lincoln [34]. This prelate was the firſt in England who began to divide his dioceſe into pariſhes, and fix a reſiding clergyman in each;

30 Nennius apud xv. ſcript. p. 117. 31 Bed. l. 2. c. 16.
32 Id. c. 17. 33 Id. c. 20. 34 Id. c. 18.

as before his time the clergy resided either in monasteries or bishops houses, and made occasional journeys into other parts, preaching and administering the sacraments [35]. Cent. VII.

Northumbrians return to Christianity.

The churches of Northumberland and East-Anglia did not continue long in a state of desolation; for king Oswald, who had lived many years among the Scots, by whom he was kindly entertained, and instructed in the knowledge of Christianity, having recovered the kingdom of Northumberland, sent into Scotland for Christian clergy to instruct and convert his subjects. Aidan, one of the most pious and learned of these Scotch missionaries, was appointed the first bishop of Lindisfarne, or Holy-Island; to which place the bishop's seat was removed from York [36]. By the labours of Aidan, and many other Scotch monks who followed him into England, the Northumbrians were soon restored to the knowledge and profession of Christianity [37]. As the East-Angles had apostatized at the same time, they were restored in the same manner with the Northumbrians. For Sigebert, a prince of their royal family, having lived some time in exile among the Franks, and been by them converted to Christianity, at his restoration to his kingdom, brought with him Felix, a Burgundian priest, who was appointed the first bishop of the

35 Godwin, p. 59.

36 Bed. l. 3. c. 3.

37 Id. c. 5.

East-

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East-Angles, and had his see fixed at a place called *Domnoc*[38].

Kingdom of Wessex converted.

About the same time that Christianity was thus restored among the Northumbrians and East-Angles, it began to be preached to the West-Saxons by Berinus, a missionary from Rome[39]. The arrival of Oswald king of Northumberland at the court of Cynigisel king of Wessex, A. D. 635, to marry the daughter of that prince, contributed greatly to the success of Berinus: for by his persuasion Cynigisel not only embraced the Christian religion, but also founded an episcopal see at Dorchester; of which Berinus was the first bishop[40].

East Saxons return to Christianity.

When the East-Saxons had continued about forty years in a state of apostasy, Sigebert their king was persuaded to embrace Christianity by his friend Oswi king of Northumberland; and great multitudes of his subjects were converted by the ministry of Chad, a Northumbrian priest, who was consecrated bishop of London by Finanus bishop of Lindisfarne[41].

Kingdom of Mercia converted.

Though the middle parts of England, which constituted the powerful kingdom of Mercia, were surrounded by Christian states on all hands, they continued a long time in Pagan darkness. These parts however were at length visited by the light of the gospel, about the middle of the

38 Bed. l. 2. c. 15.
39 Id. c. 7.
40 Id. ibid.
41 Id. l. 2. c. 22.

seventh

seventh century, in the following manner [42]. Cent. VII.
Piada, the eldest son of Penda king of Mercia, having visited the court of Oswi king of Northumberland, in order to marry Alchflida, the daughter of that prince, was there converted to Christianity, with all his followers. At his return home, he carried with him four clergymen, named *Chad*, *Adda*, *Belle*, and *Diuma*, who preached the gospel in Mercia with great success; and the last of these, who was a Scotchman, was consecrated the first bishop of the Mercians by bishop Finanus [43].

Disputes about the time of keeping Easter.

From the above account, it appears, that the English in the kingdoms of Kent and Wessex were converted to and instructed in the Christian religion by missionaries from Rome and France; while those of Mercia and Northumberland received the light of the gospel from preachers of the Scotch nation. All these different teachers established the rites and usages of the churches from whence they came, in those which they planted; which gave rise to many controversies between the English churches in the south, and those in the north, about their respective customs; particularly about the time of keeping Easter, and the form of the ecclesiastical tonsure. The churches planted by the Roman missionaries kept Easter on the first Sunday after the fourteenth and before the twenty-second day of the first moon after the vernal

[42] Bed. l. 2. c. 21. [43] Id. ibid.

equinox;

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equinox; and thoſe planted by the Scotch kept that feſtival on the firſt Sunday after the thirteenth and before the twenty-firſt day of the ſame moon[44]. By this means, when the fourteenth day of that moon happened to be a Sunday, thoſe of the Scotch communion celebrated the feaſt of Eaſter on that day; whereas thoſe of the Romiſh communion did not celebrate theirs till the Sunday after. The Romiſh clergy in the ſouth of England, animated with the haughty intolerant ſpirit of the church from whence they came, were not contented with enjoying their own cuſtoms in peace, but laboured with much violence to impoſe them upon the Britons, Scots, and northern Engliſh, who were all abundantly tenacious of their own uſages. At length a famous council was ſummoned by Oſwi king of Northumberland at Whitby in Yorkſhire, A. D. 664, to determine this mighty controverſy; which occaſioned no little confuſion in his own family, his queen and ſon following the Roman ritual, while he obſerved the Scotch. The principal champions on the Romiſh ſide at this council were, Agelbert biſhop of the Weſt-Saxons, with Agatho, James, Romanus, and Wilfred, prieſts; while Colman biſhop of Lindisfarne, with ſome of his clergy, managed the argument on the other ſide. The Scotch orators maintained, That their manner of celebrating Eaſter was preſcribed by St. John the beloved diſ-

[44] Bed. l. 3. c. 25.

ciple;

ciple; and the Romaniſts affirmed, with equal confidence, that theirs was inſtituted by St. Peter, the prince of the apoſtles, and the doorkeeper of heaven. Oſwi was ſtruck with this laſt circumſtance; and both parties acknowledging that Peter kept the keys of heaven, the king declared that he was determined not to diſoblige this celeſtial porter upon any account, but to obſerve all his inſtitutions to the utmoſt of his power, for fear he ſhould turn his back upon him when he came to the gate of heaven. This ſagacious declaration was applauded by the whole aſſembly; and the Roman orators obtained a complete victory: at which biſhop Colman, and many of his clergy, were ſo much offended, that they left England, and returned into their native country [45]. Though venerable Bede cenſures theſe Scotch clergy with great ſeverity, for the abominable error into which they had fallen about the time of keeping Eaſter, he commends them very much for their great learning, piety, and virtue; particularly for their contempt of riches, and their great diligence in their miniſterial offices; which made ſome little atonement for their moſt pernicious hereſy [46]. After the departure of Colman, one Tuda was choſen biſhop of the Northumbrians; but he dying not long after, Wilfred, who had been preceptor to Alchfred prince of Northumberland, and the chief ſpeaker on the victorious Cent. VII.

[45] Bed. l. 3. c. 25. [46] Id. c. 26.

ſide

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ſide at the late council of Whitby, was elected in his room, and ſent into France to receive conſecration. He was accordingly conſecrated by his friend Agilbertus, now archbiſhop of Paris; but making too long a ſtay abroad, his ſee was filled up in his abſence by Ceada a Scotchman, but of the Roman communion, who was conſecrated by Wini, the firſt biſhop of Wincheſter[47].

Theodore archbiſhop of Canterbury.

After Oſwi king of Northumberland embraced the Roman cuſtoms, he became zealous in his endeavours to bring all the Engliſh churches to a conformity with and obedience to the church of Rome. With this view, he joined with Egbert king of Kent in ſending Wighart, elect of Canterbury, to Rome, to be conſecrated according to the Roman ritual. Wighart was received and treated with great reſpect at Rome, but died, before his conſecration, of the plague, which then raged in that city[48]. Upon this, Vitalian, who then filled the papal chair, took a bold ſtep, and made choice of one Theodore, a native of Tarſus in Cilicia, a man of courage, learning, and good ſenſe, to fill the place for which Wighart was deſigned, and conſecrated him archbiſhop of Canterbury 25th March, A. D. 668[49]. Theodore having received the clerical tonſure after the Roman form, ſet out for England; where he arrived in May 669,

47 Eddii Vita Wilfredi, apud xv. ſcript. p. 58.

48 Bed. l. 3. c. 29. 49 Id. l. 4. c. 1.

and was favourably received by Egbert king of Kent, and the other Engliſh princes. Soon after his arrival, the new archbiſhop viſited all the Engliſh churches, conſecrated biſhops where they were wanting, and reduced every thing to a perfect conformity to the church of Rome. In this progreſs he terminated the diſpute between Ceada and Wilfred about the biſhopric of the Northumbrians, by tranſlating Ceada to the ſee of Litchfield, and eſtabliſhing Wilfred at York, which was now again become the ſeat of the biſhop of Northumberland [50]. Cent. VII.

Still further to conſolidate this union of the Engliſh churches with each other, and with the church of Rome, Theodore ſummoned a council of the Engliſh biſhops, with their chief clergy, to meet at Hartford, A. D. 673. At this council, beſides the metropolitan, Biſi biſhop of the Eaſt-Angles, Lutherius biſhop of the Weſt-Saxons, Winfred biſhop of the Mercians, and Putta biſhop of Rocheſter, were preſent in perſon, and Wilfred biſhop of York by proxy. Theodore, who preſided in this ſynod, produced a copy of the canons which he had brought with him from Rome, and pointed out ten of them which were peculiarly neceſſary to be obſerved, in order to eſtabliſh a perfect uniformity among all the Engliſh churches; to which he demanded, and obtained, the conſent of all the members [51]. Council of Hartford.

[50] Bed. l. 4. c. 2.

[51] Id. l. 4. c. 5. Spelman. Concil. t. 1. p. 152.

Beſides

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Auricular confeſſion introduced.

Beſides this union among the Engliſh churches, and conformity to the church of Rome, which was brought about by Theodore, with the conſent and authority of the Engliſh kings, this prelate introduced ſeveral new doctrines and practices that were formerly unknown. One of the moſt important of theſe innovations was the introduction of auricular confeſſion to a prieſt, as neceſſary to abſolution; directly contrary to the doctrine of the Scotch miſſionaries, who taught, that confeſſion to God was ſufficient [52].

Theodore exerciſeth his metropolitical authority.

Theodore having, by his own addreſs, and the favourable diſpoſition of the Engliſh princes of that time, obtained a tacit recognition of his own metropolitical power over all the Engliſh churches, began to exerciſe it with no little ſeverity, by depoſing Winfred biſhop of the Mercians, A. D. 676, for ſome ſlight act of diſobedience to his authority, which is not mentioned [53]. In his room he conſecrated Sexulf, founder of the abbey of Peterborough, and about the ſame time raiſed Erconwald to the ſee of London [54].

New biſhoprics erected.

By the ninth canon of the council of Hartford, it was propoſed, that new biſhoprics ſhould be erected where they were moſt wanted: but though this was one of the moſt reaſonable regulations in the whole collection, the biſhops, dreading the diminution of their power and wealth by the diviſion of their biſhoprics, did

52 Egberti Inſtitut. Eccleſ. p. 281.
53 Bed. l. 4. c. 6.
54 Id. ibid.

not

not consent to its immediate execution, but referred it to more mature consideration[55]. Till about this time, there was but one bishopric in each of the six kingdoms of the heptarchy which had embraced the Christian religion, except that of Kent, which had two. Some of these bishoprics were of very great extent; particularly that of York, which comprehended all the countries between the Humber and the frith of Forth. Wilfred bishop of that see, naturally vain and ostentatious, exceeded even the kings of those times in magnificence and expence; which excited the indignation of his sovereign Egfred king of Northumberland. This prince, in order to humble the pride of this haughty prelate, as well as for the good of his subjects, resolved to divide his enormous bishopric; and two new bishops, Bosa and Eata, were consecrated by Theodore for the Northumbrian territories[56]. Wilfred was not of a temper to sit down tamely with this diminution of his revenues and authority: he repaired to court, and boldly accusing the king and archbishop of injustice, appealed from them to the pope: a thing so new and unheard of, that it excited a loud laugh in all who were present, who could not believe him to be serious[57]. But this ecclesiastical knight-errant soon convinced them, that he was in earnest, by setting out on his journey to

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55 Spelm. Concil. t. 1. p. 153.
56 Bed. l. 4. c. 12.
57 Eddii Vita Wilfredi, c. 24.

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Rome, accompanied by a prodigious crowd of monks, who reſolved to follow his fortunes[58]. After his departure, Boſa was fixed at York, and Eata at Lindisfarne; and not long after two more biſhops were conſecrated for the Northumbrian kingdom, Tunberet and Trumwin; of whom the former was fixed at Hexham, and the latter at Abercorn, which was then within the kingdom of Northumberland[59]. Wilfred, after meeting with many ſtrange adventures in his journey, arrived at Rome, and preſented a petition to pope Agatho, in a council of fifty biſhops and abbots then ſitting, repreſenting the injury which had been done him by Theodore, in diſmembering his biſhopric without his conſent, and praying for redreſs. This petition, from ſo diſtant a corner of the church, was received with uncommon favour by the pope and council; who made a decree, reſtoring Wilfred to his ſee, and ordering thoſe who had been thruſt into it to be expelled. With this decree Wilfred haſtened back into England, and preſented it to Egfred king of Northumberland; who was ſo far from reſtoring him to his biſhopric, that he committed him to priſon. So little were the decrees of Rome at that time regarded in England[60].

Council of Hatfield.

About the ſame time the pope ſent John, precentor of St. Peter's, into England, to examine

58 Eddii Vita Wilfredi, c. 25. 59 Bed. l. 4. c. 12.
60 Bed. l. 4. c. 13. Spelm. Concil. t. 1. p. 160.

the

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the ſentiments of the Engliſh churches concerning the hereſy of the Monothelites, which made a mighty noiſe. Theodore, to ſatisfy the pope in this particular, ſummoned a ſynod to meet at Hatfield, September 15, A. D. 680; in which a confeſſion of the faith of the church of England (which was perfectly orthodox) was drawn up, and tranſmitted to Rome[61]. The legate had alſo a private commiſſion to promote the reſtoration of Wilfred to his biſhopric, and his reconciliation with Theodore; but in this he had no ſucceſs.

New biſhoprics erected.

The biſhopric of Mercia, which was ſeated at Litchfield, and comprehended all the dominions of the Mercian kings, was diſmembered about this time; and out of it no fewer than four new biſhoprics were erected, viz. thoſe of Worceſter, Leiceſter, Hereford, and Sydnaceſter[62].

Kingdom of Suſſex converted by Wilfred.

When Wilfred, the ejected biſhop of York, had continued near a year in priſon, he obtained his liberty, by the earneſt interceſſion of Æbbe abbeſs of Coldingham, and aunt to king Egfred, upon this condition, That he ſhould immediately abandon the territories of Northumberland[63]. But the reſentment and influence of Egfred were ſo great, that the unhappy Wilfred could find no ſhelter in any of the Chriſtian kingdoms of the heptarchy, which obliged him to retire into the little kingdom of

61 Spelm. Concil. t. 1. p. 168. 62 Higden. Polychron. p. 241.
63 Eddii Vita Wilfredi, c. 31.

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Suſſex, which was ſtill unconverted. Here he met with a very kind reception from Ethelwalch, the reigning king, and Æbæ his queen, who were both Chriſtians, and gave all poſſible encouragement to him and his companions to preach the goſpel to their ſubjects, who were Pagans. Wilfred, by his learning and eloquence, aſſiſted by the influence of the king and queen, perſuaded many of the nobility to embrace the Chriſtian religion, while his companions were no leſs ſucceſsful among the common people. To reward and encourage Wilfred and his fellow-labourers, the king beſtowed upon him a conſiderable tract of country in the peninſula of Selſey, with all the cattle and ſlaves upon it; where he built a monaſtery, and founded a biſhop's ſee, which was afterwards removed to Chicheſter [64]. While Wilfred reſided in theſe parts, he was the inſtrument, by the miniſtry of ſome of his followers, of converting the inhabitants of the iſle of Wight, and obtained a grant of the third part of that iſland, from Ceadwalla king of Weſſex [65]. In this manner was the laſt of the ſeven Saxon ſtates in England brought into the boſom of the Chriſtian church, about ninety years after the arrival of Auſtin, and a little before the end of the ſeventh century.

Continuation of Wilfred's hiſtory.

The ſucceſs of Wilfred in the converſion of the South-Saxons regained him the favour and

64 Bed. l. 4. c. 13.

65 Id. c. 16.

friendſhip

friendſhip of Theodore archbiſhop of Canterbury, who recommended him, in the warmeſt manner, to Ethelred king of Mercia, and to Alfred, who had ſucceeded his brother Egfred in the kingdom of Northumberland, A. D. 685[66]. This laſt prince having no perſonal enmity againſt Wilfred, permitted him to return into his dominions, A. D. 687, and beſtowed upon him the biſhopric of Hexham, which was then vacant; to which (if we may believe Eddius, the writer of his life) he afterwards added the ſee of York, and monaſtery of Rippon[67]. But this ambitious and reſtleſs prelate ſoon forfeited the favour and incurred the diſpleaſure of king Alfred, by refuſing to ſubſcribe the canons of the councils of Hartford and Hatfield, and by daily advancing claims to thoſe immenſe poſſeſſions which he had when he was ſole biſhop of the Northumbrian kingdom, and held, beſides, no fewer than twelve abbeys. In the proſecution of thoſe claims, which could not be granted, he at length became ſo clamorous and turbulent, that king Alfred was provoked to expel him out of his dominions, about five years after his return. Upon this ſecond expulſion, Wilfred retired into Mercia, where he was kindly received by king Ethelred, who beſtowed upon him the vacant ſee of Leiceſter; where we muſt leave him for a little[68].

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66 Eddii Vita Wilfredi, c. 42.

67 Id. c. 43.

68 Id. c. 44.

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Actions and death of Theodore.

Theodore archbiſhop of Canterbury died in the twenty-third year of his pontificate, and eighty-ninth of his age, A. D. 690[69]. After this ſee had remained two years vacant, it was filled by Brightwald, an Engliſh monk, who governed it thirty-eight years and ſix months[70]. Theodore was certainly one of the greateſt men that ever filled the chair of Canterbury. By his influence, all the Engliſh churches were united, and brought to a perfect uniformity in diſcipline and worſhip;—too large biſhoprics were divided, and many new ones erected;—great men were encouraged to build pariſh-churches, by declaring them and their ſucceſſors patrons of thoſe churches[71];—a regular proviſion was made for the clergy in all the kingdoms of the heptarchy, by the impoſition of a certain tax or kirk-ſhot upon every village, from which the moſt obſcure ones were not exempted[72]. By theſe and other wiſe regulations introduced by this great prelate, the church of England became a regular compact body, furniſhed with a competent number of biſhops and inferior clergy, under their metropolitan the archbiſhop of Canterbury.

Monaſteries of the ſeventh century.

In the courſe of the ſeventh century, many monaſteries were founded in all parts of England. Theſe monaſteries were at firſt deſigned,

69 Godwin de Præſul Angl. p. 61.
70 Id. ibid.
71 Bed. Ed. Wheelock, p. 399.
72 Bed. Epiſt. ad Egberet. p. 307.

in

in some places, for the seats of bishops and their clergy; in others, for the residence of secular priests, who preached and administered the sacraments over all the neighbouring country; and in all places they were seminaries of learning for the education of youth. No vows of celibacy or poverty were required of the priests who inhabited these monasteries; though, towards the end of this century, celibacy was strongly recommended to the English monks and clergy, by Theodore, in his Penitentials [73]. These monasteries being generally well built and well endowed, were by far the most comfortable places of residence in those times; which engaged such numbers of persons of all ranks and characters to crowd into them, that they soon became intolerable grievances [74]. The fondness for the monastic life was very much increased by an impious doctrine, which began to be broached about the end of this century, "That as soon as any person put "on the habit of a monk, all the sins of his "former life were forgiven [75]." This engaged many princes and great men (who have sometimes as many sins as their inferiors) to put on the monastic habit, and end their days in monasteries. Cent. VII.

Superstition, in various forms, made great progress in the seventh century; particularly an extravagant veneration for relics, in which the Superstitions introduced.

73 Theod. Pœnitent. p. 7. 74 Bed. Epist. ad Egberet.
75 Theod. Capit. Labb. Concil. t. 6. col. 1875.

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Romiſh prieſts drove a very gainful trade, as few good Chriſtians thought themſelves ſafe from the machinations of the devil, unleſs they carried the relics of ſome ſaint about their perſons; and no church could be dedicated without a decent quantity of this ſacred trumpery [76]. Stories of dreams, viſions, and miracles, were propagated without a bluſh by the clergy, and believed without a doubt by the laity [77]. Extraordinary watchings, faſtings, and other arts of tormenting the body, in order to ſave the ſoul, became frequent and faſhionable; and it began to be believed, that a journey to Rome was the moſt direct road to heaven [78].

State of the Britiſh and Scotch churches.

We know of no important changes that happened in the Britiſh churches in the ſeventh century; during which they had little or no communication either with Rome or Canterbury, but continued to adhere to their ancient doctrines and primitive modes of worſhip. Some of the Britons, particularly thoſe of Cornwall, it is ſaid, were converted to the Catholic Eaſter about the end of this century, by the writings of Aldhelm, afterwards biſhop of Sherburn; but it is probable, that the victorious arms of the Weſt-Saxon kings contributed as much to this converſion as the writings of that prelate [79]. The churches of the Scots and Picts were in the ſame ſituation with thoſe of the Britons in the

76 Spelm. Concil. t. 1. p. 99. 104. 77 Vide Bed. paſſim.
78 Id. ibid. 79 Bed. l. 5. c. 16.

ſeventh

seventh century: unconnected with the churches of Rome and England, they persevered in their ancient usages with the greatest constancy. Adamnan abbot of Iona having been sent ambassador to Alfred king of Northumberland, about the end of this century, was converted to the Catholic Easter, and after his return laboured with much earnestness, and some success, to convert his countrymen [80]. Cent. VII.

SECTION III.

History of Religion in Great Britain, from A. D. 700 *to* A. D. 800.

THE peace of the church of England was again disturbed in the beginning of the eighth century by the famous Wilfred, ejected bishop of York. This turbulent prelate was far from being contented with the see of Leicester bestowed upon him by the king of Mercia, but made unwearied efforts to recover his former high station and great possessions in the kingdom of Northumberland; which still more inflamed the resentment of king Alfred. This prince, with Brithwald archbishop of Canterbury, assembled a synod of English bishops and clergy A. D. 701; to which they invited Wilfred, resolving to prevail upon him, either by persuasions Cent. VIII. The history of Wilfred continued.

[80] Bed. l. 5. c. 16.

or

Cent. VIII. or threats, to retire into a private ſtation. He appeared before the ſynod; but treated all their perſuaſions and threats with equal ſcorn; upon which he was deprived of all his preferments, except the abbey of Rippon, which was left him for a retreat. Wilfred proteſted againſt this ſentence, and appealed to the pope; which ſo incenſed king Alfred againſt him, that he would have commanded his guards to cut him in pieces, if the biſhops had not interpoſed [1]. Theſe prelates, however, were ſo much diſpleaſed with the refractory behaviour of Wilfred, that they inflicted upon him the higheſt cenſures of the church; and both he and his followers were held in ſuch execration, that if any of them made the ſign of the croſs on the diſhes upon a table (a ceremony then uſed before meat), they were immediately thrown to the dogs [2]. The condemned excommunicated prelate departed from Oneſterfield, where the ſynod was held, into Mercia, in order to diſcover what impreſſion theſe proceedings had made on the mind of king Ethelred. After complaining to that prince of the injuſtice which had been done him, he earneſtly requeſted to know, whether or not he deſigned to deprive him of the revenues of the biſhopric and monaſteries which he had given him in his dominions? To which he received this favourable anſwer, That he would not de-

[1] Spelm. Concil. t. 1. p. 202. Eddii Vita Wilfredi, p. 76. c. 46.
[2] Id. c. 47.

prive

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prive him of these revenues until the final sentence of the pope was known [3]. Encouraged by this assurance, he set out on his journey to Rome, where he arrived A. D. 702; and falling upon his knees, presented his petition to the pope; addressed, "To the Apostolic Lord, the thrice-"blessed and universal bishop, pope John;" and couched in the most flattering and artful terms. Wilfred was very graciously received, and lodged and entertained, with all his followers, at the public expence. The archbishop had also sent deputies to Rome, to defend the sentence of the synod, who were not received with equal favour. These deputies accused Wilfred of refusing to subscribe the canons of the two synods of Hartford and Hatfield; to which he replied, that he was willing to subscribe the canons of those synods, as far as they were agreeable to the canons of the church of Rome, and the will of the pope. The deputies accused him further of being guilty of refusing to submit to the sentence of his metropolitan and his bishops in the synod of Onesterfield, and of appealing to a foreign judge, which by the laws of England was a capital crime. But though this was a crime in England, it appeared a most meritorious act at Rome. After both parties had pleaded their cause at full length, and the pope had taken some time to consider of it, with a council which was then sitting, a day was ap-

3 Eddii Vita Wilfredi, p. 76. c. 47.

pointed

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pointed for pronouncing ſentence. When that day arrived, the pope appeared in great ſtate, ſurrounded by the council of biſhops; and both parties being preſent, pronounced his ſentence; reverſing that of the ſynod of Oneſterfield, and declaring Wilfred entirely innocent of all the crimes laid to his charge. With this ſentence, Wilfred returned in triumph into England, was reconciled to Brightwald archbiſhop of Canterbury, and kindly received by Ethelred king of Mercia. But king Alfred, and his immediate ſucceſſor Eadwulf, treated the papal ſentence with contempt, and would not permit Wilfred to enter their dominions [4].

Hiſtory of Wilfred finiſhed.

Though Wilfred had been thus repulſed by theſe two kings of Northumberland, he never relinquiſhed his pretenſions in that kingdom; and his hopes of making theſe pretenſions good began to revive on the acceſſion of Oſred, a child of eight years of age, to that throne, A. D. 704. By his intereſt with the archbiſhop, and with Berechtfred, who had the chief direction of affairs in the kingdom of Northumberland, he procured a council to be called in the north, for the final determination of all thoſe diſputes, which had ſubſiſted almoſt forty years, and had occaſioned infinite trouble to himſelf and to his country. This council, which was very numerous, was held in the open air on the banks of the river Nidd in Yorkſhire, A. D.

4 Eddii Vita Wilfredi, c. 45—58.

705.

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705. Archbiſhop Brightwald, who preſided in it, laid before the council a copy of the pope's ſentence in favour of Wilfred, with his letter to the late king Alfred, requiring the reſtitution of his dignities and poſſeſſions in Northumberland, with which that prince had not complied; and aſked the members of the council, what they thought was moſt proper to be done for terminating theſe long and fatal diſputes? The biſhops at firſt diſcovered no diſpoſition to comply with the pope's ſentence; who, they ſaid, had no right to reverſe the ſentence of an Engliſh ſynod, or to lay any commands on an Engliſh king. But at length, by the intreaties of Brightwald, Berechtfred, Ælfleda abbeſs of Whitby, and others, this tedious affair was compromiſed in this manner: John of Beverly, biſhop of Hexham, was tranſlated to York, which was then vacant; and the biſhopric of Hexham, with the abbey of Rippon, were beſtowed on Wilfred; with which he remained contented. This famous prelate ſurvived that deciſion only about four years; and dying A. D. 709, at his monaſtery of Oundle at Nottinghamſhire, he was buried with great funeral pomp at his abbey of Rippon in Yorkſhire [5]. Wilfred was certainly one of the moſt extraordinary men of the age in which he lived. On the one hand, he was graceful in his perſon, engaging in his manners, learned, eloquent, and regular in his conduct,

[5] Eddii Vita Wilfredi, c. 58—65.

which

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which gained him many powerful friends; but on the other hand, he was ambitious, reſtleſs, and inflexible, which raiſed him up no leſs powerful enemies, and involved both himſelf and his country in perpetual broils.

Several kings become monks.

The humour of making pilgrimages to Rome, and of retiring into monaſteries, ſtill increaſing, Coinred king of Mercia laid down his ſceptre, and took up the pilgrim's ſtaff, A. D. 709, and travelled to Rome, accompanied by Offa, a young prince of the royal family of the Eaſt-Saxons, where they both became monks [6]. Not long after, Ina, the victorious king of the Weſt-Saxons, imitated their example, and ended his life in a cloiſter at Rome, where he founded a houſe for the entertainment of Engliſh pilgrims and the education of Engliſh youth [7]. This prince, and his cotemporary Withred king of Kent, were great friends to the clergy, and made ſeveral laws for the ſecurity of their perſons, privileges, and revenues [8].

State of the church of England at the death of venerable Bede.

The churches of the ſeveral Engliſh kingdoms enjoyed ſo much internal peace for many years after the death of Wilfred, that they furniſh few materials of importance for their eccleſiaſtical hiſtory; which for a long time conſiſts of little more than the names and ſucceſſion of biſhops in the ſeveral ſees; with which it would be improper to ſwell this work. When the venerable

[6] Bed. l. 5. c. 19. [7] Chron. Saxon. p. 53.
[8] Spelm. Concil. t. 1. p. 182—199.

hiſtorian

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hiſtorian Bede concludes his excellent hiſtory of the church of England A. D. 731, he acquaints us, that it was then governed by ſixteen biſhops, who had their ſeats at the following places:— Canterbury, Rocheſter, London, Dunwich, Helmham, Wincheſter, Sherburn, Litchfield, Leiceſter, Hereford, Worceſter, Sydnaceſter, York, Holy Iſland, Hexham, and Withern[9]. There was no biſhop in the little kingdom of Suſſex at this time; but Sigelm was conſecrated biſhop of Selſey a few years after; which made the number of biſhops in England, before the middle of the eighth century, ſeventeen[10].

Egbert archbiſhop of York.

Upon the death of Wilfred, the ſecond biſhop of York, A. D. 731, Egbert, brother to Eadbert king of Northumberland, was advanced to that ſee. This prelate, by his royal birth and great merit, recovered the dignity of a metropolitan, which had been enjoyed by Paulinus the firſt biſhop of York, and obtained a pall from Rome as a badge of that dignity[11].

Letter of Boniface archbiſhop of Mentz to Cuthbert archbiſhop of Canterbury.

Nothelmus archbiſhop of Canterbury dying A. D. 740, Cuthbert biſhop of Hereford was tranſlated to that ſee. An intimate friendſhip had long ſubſiſted between Cuthbert and his countryman Winfred, who had aſſumed the name of *Boniface*, and was become archbiſhop of Mentz. As ſoon as Boniface received the news of the advancement of his friend to the primacy

9 Bed. Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 5. c. 23. 10 Godwin de Præſul. p. 548.
11 Id. t. 2. p. 14.

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of England, he wrote him a very long letter; in which, after many profeſſions of eſteem and friendſhip, and moſt vehement exhortations to the faithful diſcharge of the duties of his high office, he points out ſeveral things in the ſtate of the church of England which required reformation; particularly the gaudy dreſs and intemperate lives of the clergy; the ſacrilege of great men, in ſeizing the government of monaſteries, and obliging the monks to perform the moſt ſervile work in building their caſtles, &c.; a thing unknown in any other part of the Chriſtian world. He exhorts him alſo to put a ſtop to the nuns, and other good ladies of England, leaving their country, and going in pilgrimage to Rome; becauſe they were generally debauched before they returned, and many of them became common proſtitutes in the cities of France and Italy. To remedy all theſe evils, he adviſes him to call a council; and for his direction ſends him a copy of the canons of a ſynod, which had been lately held at Mentz, in which he had preſided in quality of the pope's legate. For as Boniface had received his preferment in the church by the favour of the pope, he was a zealous advocate for his ſupremacy, and had contributed very much to bring the churches of Germany under the obedience of the ſee of Rome; and ſeems to wiſh that his friend Cuthbert would act the ſame part in England [12].

[12] Spelm. Concil. t. 1. p. 237.

This

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Council of Cloveshoos.

This letter, it is probable, engaged Cuthbert to assemble a council of the bishops and chief clergy of his province, which met at Cloveshoos, or Clyff, in Kent, A. D. 747. Edelbald king of Mercia, with all the great men of his court, Cuthbert archbishop of Canterbury, with eleven bishops of his province, together with many abbots, abbesses, and other clergy, were present at this council; in which no fewer than thirty canons were made for the reformation of the lives of the clergy of all ranks, and the regulation of all the affairs of the church of England. The canons of this council, which were for the most part taken from those of the council of Mentz, transmitted by Boniface, contain many wise and judicious regulations, considering the age in which they were made. It is, however, very worthy of our attention, that the council of Cloveshoos made a very important alteration in the canon concerning the unity of the church. The canon of the council of Mentz on this subject runs thus:—"We have agreed in our synod "in the confession of the catholic faith, and "agreed to continue in unity and subjection to "the church of Rome; and desire to be sub-"ject to St. Peter and his vicar, to the end of "our lives, that we may be esteemed members "of that church committed to St. Peter's "care[13]." But the canon of the council of Cloveshoos was couched in the following general

[13] Labb. Concil. t. 6. col. 1544.

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terms, without ſo much as mentioning the church or biſhop of Rome: "That ſincere love and "Chriſtian unity and affection ought to be "amongſt all the clergy in the world, in deed "and judgment (without flattery of any one's "perſon), as the ſervants of one Lord, and "fellow-labourers in the ſame goſpel: ſo that "however ſeparated by the diſtance of place, "they may notwithſtanding be united in the "ſame judgment, and ſerve God in one ſpirit, "in the ſame faith, hope, and charity; daily "praying for each other, that every one may "faithfully perſevere to the end, in the diſ-"charge of his holy function [14]." This remarkable caution in the language of this canon, is a ſufficient proof, that the clergy of England were not as yet diſpoſed to bend their necks to the intolerable and ignominious yoke of Rome. So careful were they in this council to guard againſt the incroachments of the pope on the independency of the church of England, that applications to Rome for advice in difficult caſes, were diſcouraged by the twenty-fifth canon, and biſhops directed to apply only to their metropolitan in a provincial ſynod [15]. Many excellent advices are given to the biſhops, clergy, and people, in the canons of this council. Biſhops are directed to viſit all parts of their dioceſes once every year, for preaching and performing the other duties of their ſacred function;—to keep a watchful eye

[14] Spel. Concil. t. 1. p. 246. [15] Id. ibid.

over the conduct of the inferior clergy, who ſtill, for the moſt part, lived in monaſteries;—and to be very careful in examining into the morals and learning of thoſe whom they admitted into holy orders. Abbots are commanded to take care that the clergy, in their reſpective houſes, ſhould be ſtudious, ſober, and decent in their dreſs and deportment. The clergy are injoined to be diligent in viſiting, preaching, and baptizing; to learn to conſtrue in their own language the creed and Lord's prayer, and the words uſed in the celebration of maſs, and in the office of baptiſm. The people are exhorted,—to get the creed and Lord's prayer by heart,—to the religious obſervation of the Lord's day,—to frequent communion, to confeſſion, faſting, and almſgiving. Several very ſingular directions are given in the twenty-ſeventh canon, to the common people who did not underſtand Latin, about the manner of their joining in the public prayers and ſongs of the church, which were all in that language: in particular, they are allowed to affix any meaning to the words they pleaſed in their own minds, and to pray in their hearts for any thing they wanted, no matter how foreign to the real ſenſe of the public prayers[16]. A curious ſalvo for the abſurd practice of praying in an unknown tongue! This canon alſo contains the following ſhort form of prayer for the dead: "Lord, ac- "cording to the greatneſs of thy mercy, grant Cent. VIII.

[16] Spel. Concil. t. 1. p. 246.

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" reſt to his ſoul, and for thy infinite pity vouch-
" ſafe to him the joys of eternal light with thy
" ſaints." About this time, ſome great men, who were not very fond of going through the faſtings and prayers injoined them by their confeſſors, propoſed to hire poor people to faſt and pray in their ſtead. This was certainly a very lucky thought; but it had not the good fortune to meet with the approbation of this council.

Quarrels about the bodies of the archbiſhops.

Cuthbert archbiſhop of Canterbury died A. D. 758. All his predeceſſors had been interred by the monks of St. Auguſtin, in their monaſtery, without the walls of Canterbury, who now conſidered the corpſes of their departed prelates as a kind of perquiſite to which they had a right. Cuthbert, for what reaſon we know not, formed the deſign of depriving them of his remains; and for that purpoſe obtained a formal permiſſion from Eadbert king of Kent, to be buried in his own cathedral. When he found his end approaching, he directed his domeſtics to put his body into the grave as ſoon as he expired, and before they publiſhed his death; which they accordingly performed. When the monks of St. Auguſtin, on hearing of the archbiſhop's death, came in ſolemn proceſſion to take poſſeſſion of his remains, they were told, that he was already buried; at which they were ſo provoked, that they called him a rogue, a fox, a viper, and all the opprobrious names they could invent [17].

[17] Godwin de Præſul. Ang. p. 65.

Bregwin,

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Bregwin, who was a native of Saxony, but educated in England, was placed in the archiepiſcopal chair, when it had been about a year vacant; and he filled it only three years, dying Auguſt 24, A. D. 762. By his own direction, he was buried in the ſame place, and in the ſame precipitate manner with his predeceſſor. When Lambert abbot of St. Auguſtin's came with a body of armed men to ſeize the body of the archbiſhop as his lawful property, and found himſelf anticipated a ſecond time, he took the matter in a very ſerious light, and made a ſolemn appeal to the pope, to interpoſe his authority for preventing ſuch clandeſtine funerals for the future. This mighty buſtle about the lifeleſs bodies of theſe prelates may appear to us ridiculous; but the monks of St. Auguſtin knew very well what they were about, and how much it redounded to the reputation and intereſt of their ſociety to be in poſſeſſion of the remains of thoſe primates, in that ſuperſtitious age, when relics were the moſt valuable treaſures. The canons of Chriſt's church, who had the privilege of chuſing the archbiſhop, and had been concerned in ſmuggling their two late ones into their graves, were ſo much alarmed at Lambert's appeal to the pope againſt them, that, in order to mitigate his zeal in the cauſe of their rivals, they choſe him to fill the vacant chair. This artful conduct had its deſired effect: Lambert was appeaſed, and deſiſted from proſecuting his appeal [18].

[18] Godwin de Præſul. Ang. p. 65.

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The pope obtains a great acceſſion of power and territories.

About the middle of the eighth century, ſeveral great and ſudden revolutions happened in Italy, and in the ſtate of the church of Rome, which in their conſequences very much affected all the Chriſtian world. Though the emperors of the eaſt, who reſided at Conſtantinople, were nominal ſovereigns of Rome and Italy; the diſtance of their ſituation, and other circumſtances, rendered their authority feeble and precarious. When the emperor Leo Iſaurus publiſhed his famous edict, A. D. 730, againſt the uſe and worſhip of images, commanding them to be removed out of churches, the biſhops of Rome oppoſed the execution of that edict with great vehemence, and encouraged the chief cities of Italy to ſhake off all ſubjection to the emperors of the Eaſt. But they were ſoon puniſhed for this revolt by Aſtulphus king of Lombardy, who over-run the greateſt part of Italy, and threatened the deſtruction of the church of Rome. In this extremity, Stephen II. who was then pope, A. D. 752, earneſtly implored the protection of Pepin king of France; who marching at the head of a powerful army into Italy, A. D. 753, defeated Aſtulphus, and recovered all the countries which he had conquered. But inſtead of reſtoring thoſe countries to the emperors of the Eaſt, their ancient ſovereigns, he beſtowed the city and territories of Rome, the exarchate of Ravenna, and ſeveral other cities, on the pope; which raiſed him from the very brink of ruin to be a powerful temporal prince, and enabled him and his ſucceſſors to proſecute

their

their claims to ſpiritual dominion over the Chriſtian world with greater ſpirit and ſucceſs [19]. Cent. VIII.

Egbert, the firſt Engliſh archbiſhop of York, one of the beſt and moſt learned prelates of his age, after having governed that ſee with great dignity about thirty-ſix years, died A. D. 767; and was ſucceeded by Adelbert, who makes no diſtinguiſhed figure in hiſtory [20]. Death of Egbert archbiſhop of York.

While Lambert filled the archiepiſcopal chair of Canterbury, a conſiderable revolution happened in the government of the church of England. Offa king of Mercia, who was by far the moſt powerful prince of the heptarchy, thinking it inconvenient and diſhonourable for the biſhops of his kingdom to be ſubject to the metropolitical authority of the archbiſhops of Canterbury, reſolved to erect the ſee of Litchfield, his capital, into an archbiſhopric. Lambert oppoſed the execution of this deſign as much as poſſible; but Offa's ſuperior power and wealth at length prevailed, and Hegbert biſhop of Litchfield was declared an archbiſhop by the pope, A. D. 787; and the ſees of Worceſter, Hereford, Leiceſter, Sydnaceſter, Helmham, and Dunwich, diſmembered from the province of Canterbury, and put under the juriſdiction of the new archbiſhop. Hegbert dying ſoon after his elevation, was ſucceeded by Adulph, who received a pall, Litchfield made the ſee of an archbiſhop.

[19] Inett's Hiſt. Engl. Church, c. 12.

[20] Godwin de Præſul. Ang. t. 2. p. 15.

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the distinguishing badge of the archiepiscopal dignity, from pope Adrian I. [21].

Council of Calcuith.

The pope about this time sent Gregory bishop of Ostia, and Theophilact bishop of Todi, as his legates into England, to visit the several English churches. These legates acquainted the pope, by a letter, That they had arrived safe in England, and waited upon Lambert archbishop of Canterbury, and executed their commission; which was, probably, to obtain his consent to the dismembering of his province:—That they had then repaired to the court of Offa king of Mercia; who received them with great joy, and very much approved of all they had proposed:—That because the country was very extensive, in order to do their business with the greater expedition, they had separated; Theophilact remaining in Mercia, to attend a great council of that kingdom; while Gregory proceeded to the court of Olfwald king of Northumberland; who also called a council of the nobility and chief clergy of his kingdom:—That they, the legates, had laid the regulations or canons which they had brought with them from Rome before both these councils; by whom they had been maturely considered, and universally approved, and subscribed by the kings of Mercia and Northumberland, with all the chief nobility, bishops, and clergy of England. The Mercian synod met at a place named *Calcuith*; which is the reason that these

[21] Anglia Sacra, t. 1. p. 429.

regula-

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regulations are commonly called *the canons of the council of Calcuith*[22]. These canons, which are twenty in number, contain a kind of system of the ecclesiastical politics of those times, in which we may discern the clergy beginning to advance several new claims, such as, a divine right to the tenth of all the possessions of the laity, and an exemption from being tried and punished by the civil magistrates[23]. To support this last claim, several texts of scripture are most shamefully misinterpreted. The legates, after their arrival in England, observed several peculiarities which they disapproved, and therefore prohibited in these canons; such as,—the priests celebrating mass without shoes or stockings, and with chalices made of horn;—the bishops sitting on the bench with the aldermen, and judging in civil and criminal causes;—and the people still retaining many Pagan practices, as sorceries, divinations, &c.[24]. It is said to have been in this council of Calcuith that Lambert archbishop of Canterbury gave his consent to the erection of Litchfield into an archbishopric; but if this was true, it appears, that his pride was not abated by this great diminution of his power; for his name stands in the subscription of the canons before that of Offa king of Mercia.

Controversy about the worship of images.

The great controversy about the use of images in churches, and the degree of homage that was

[22] Spelman Concil. t. 1. p. 291. [23] Id. canon 11. 17.
[24] Id. canon 10. 3.

to

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to be paid to them, which had raged with incredible violence on the continent for more than ſixty years, began to be agitated in England towards the end of this century. Two ſucceeding emperors of the Eaſt, Leo Iſaurus, and his ſon Conſtantine Copronimus, exerted all their power to prevent the worſhip, by aboliſhing the uſe, of images in churches; while ſeveral ſucceeding popes, their cotemporaries, ſupported the cauſe of images with at leaſt equal zeal. In the Eaſt, the influence of the emperors at length prevailed; and both the uſe and adoration of images were condemned by a council of three hundred and thirty-eight biſhops, at Conſtantinople, A. D. 754[25]. But in the Weſt, the authority of the biſhops of Rome gained the aſcendant. Italy revolted from the emperors, images were retained, and too much regarded, not to ſay adored. When this controverſy ſeemed to be at an end in the Eaſt, and images were caſt out of almoſt all the churches, a great revolution happened at the death of the emperor Leo IV. by the adminiſtration falling into the hands of his widow the empreſs Irene, in the minority of her ſon. This princeſs (who was one of the worſt of women) formed the deſign of reſtoring the uſe and worſhip of images in the Eaſt; which ſhe communicated to pope Adrian, for his advice and aſſiſtance. When all matters were properly prepared, a council was ſummoned to meet

[25] Lab. Coun. t. 6. col. 1661.

at

at Conſtantinople, A. D. 786; but being prevented by a tumult from ſitting in that city, it met the year after at Nice. This council (which conſiſted of about one hundred and fifty biſhops, and is commonly called the ſecond council of Nice) reverſed the acts of the late council of Conſtantinople againſt images, and decreed both the uſe and adoration of them, with a few frivolous diſtinctions [26]. The acts of this council were received with great joy at Rome, and a copy of them ſent into France: where they did not meet with ſo favourable a reception; for though the churches of France allowed the uſe, they prohibited the worſhip of images, with great ſtrictneſs. Charlemagne king of France put theſe acts into the hands of a ſelect number of biſhops; who drew up an elaborate confutation of them, in four books, which were publiſhed in the king's name, and are commonly called the *Caroline books* [27]. Charlemagne ſent a copy of the canons of the council of Nice to his friend and ally Offa king of Mercia, to be communicated to the Engliſh biſhops; by whom they were condemned, "as containing many "things contrary to the true catholic faith, "eſpecially the worſhip of images, which the "catholic church utterly deteſted and abhorred [28]." The Engliſh biſhops employed their learned countryman Alcuinus to write

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[26] Du Pin, Eccleſ. Hiſt. cent. 8.

[27] Id. ibid.

[28] M. Weſtminſter, ad an. 793.

againſt

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againſt this council; and tranſmitted his book, with their own opinion, to the king of France [29]. From this detail, it is ſufficiently evident, that though images and pictures had long been uſed in the churches of France and England, as ornaments, and helps to memory, theſe churches, at the end of the eighth century, were not arrived at that degree of folly and impiety as to pay them any kind of worſhip.

Sale of relics.

The ſale of relics was now become a gainful trade to the clergy, and eſpecially to the monks, who were fortunate in making daily diſcoveries of the precious remains of ſome departed ſaint; which they ſoon converted into gold and ſilver. In this traffick they had all the opportunities they could deſire of impoſing counterfeit wares upon their cuſtomers, as it was no eaſy matter for the laity to diſtinguiſh the great toe of a ſaint from that of a ſinner, after it had been ſome centuries in the grave. The place where the body of St. Alban, the protomartyr of Britain, lay, is ſaid to have been diſcovered to Offa king of Mercia, in a viſion, A. D. 794; and was taken up with much ceremony in the preſence of three biſhops, and an infinite multitude of people of all ranks, and lodged in a rich ſhrine, adorned with gold and precious ſtones. To do the greater honour to the memory of the holy martyr, Offa built a ſtately monaſtery at the place where his body was found, which he called by his name, *St. Alban's*,

29 M. Weſtminſter, ad an. 793.

and in which he depoſited his remains, enriching it with many lands and privileges [30]. Cent. VIII.

Offa's journey to Rome.

Offa, who had been guilty of ſome very horrid crimes, became more and more ſuperſtitious as he advanced in years, and at length made a journey to Rome, where he ſquandered away a great deal of money, to procure the pardon of his ſins. In particular, he made a grant of three hundred and ſixty-five mancuſſes, being one mancus for each day in the year, to be diſpoſed of by the pope to certain charitable and pious uſes [31]. This grant was afterwards converted into an annual tax upon the Engliſh nation, and demanded in the moſt imperious manner as a lawful tribute, and mark of ſubjection of the kingdom of England to the church of Rome [32].

The ſee of Litchfield reduced to its former ſtate.

The ſee of Litchfield did not very long enjoy the honour of being an archbiſhopric. For king Offa dying ſoon after his return from Rome, A. D. 796, and his ſon Egfred in leſs than a year after, Kenulph, who ſucceeded this laſt prince, was prevailed upon to reſtore things to their former ſtate. Some pretend, that he was brought to form this reſolution by the addreſs of Athelard archbiſhop of Canterbury, a prelate of great abilities; but others imagine, with greater probability, that he was chiefly influenced by

30 M. Paris Vita Offæ, p. 26. W. Malmſ. l. 1. c. 4.

31 Anglia Sacra, l. 1. p. 460.

32 Hen. Hunt. l. 4. R. Hoveden, pars prior. Inett's Church Hiſtory, c. 13.

political

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political conſiderations; and that he did this great favour to the ſee of Canterbury, in order to gain the affections of the people of Kent, who had lately become his tributaries[33]. However this may be, it is ſufficiently evident, that king Kenulph, with the conſent of the pope, reduced Adulphus archbiſhop of Litchfield to the ſtate of a private biſhop, and put him, and all the other biſhops of his kingdom, again under the metropolitical authority of the ſee of Canterbury; though Adulphus was indulged in the empty honour of wearing the pall of an archbiſhop as long as he lived.

General ſtate of religion in Britain in this century.

Ignorance and ſuperſtition increaſed greatly in the church of England, as well as in other parts of the Chriſtian world, in the courſe of the eighth century. Pilgrimages to Rome became far more frequent, and were attended with worſe effects than formerly;—the rage of retiring into monaſteries became more violent in perſons of all ranks, to the ruin of military diſcipline, and of every uſeful art;—the clergy became more knaviſh and rapacious, and the laity more abject and ſtupid, than in any former period. Of this the trade of relics, which can never be carried on but between knaves and fools, is a ſufficient evidence. The number of holidays, and of childiſh and trifling ceremonies, which are equally pernicious to honeſt induſtry and rational religion, were very much increaſed in the

33 Godwin de Præſul. Angliæ, p. 67. Inett's Church Hiſtory, c. 14.

courſe

courſe of this dark age. As the Britons, Scots, and Picts, had little or no intercourſe with Rome in this period, it is probable, that ſuperſtition had not made ſuch rapid progreſs amongſt them as amongſt the Engliſh. But we know ſo little of the eccleſiaſtical hiſtory of theſe three nations in this century, that we can produce nothing of certainty and importance on that ſubject, unleſs the converſion of the Scots and Picts to the Roman rule in celebrating Eaſter, which happened in this century, can be called important. Cent. VIII.

SECTION IV.

The hiſtory of religion in Great Britain, from A. D. 800, *to* A. D. 900.

ATHELARD archbiſhop of Canterbury took a journey to Rome, A. D. 801, to obtain the formal conſent of the pope to the reunion of the province of Litchfield to that of Canterbury. He met with a very favourable reception, and eaſily obtained every thing he deſired, as it was one part of the papal policy to encourage applications to Rome, from all parts, and on all occaſions. The pope, to ſhew how highly he was pleaſed with Kenulph king of Mercia (who had wrote him a very reſpectful letter, accompanied with a preſent of one hundred and twenty manculſes), and with the archbiſhop, who had paid him Cent. IX. Archbiſhop Athelard's journey to Rome.

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him a visit, sent an answer to the king; in which that prince, and his primate, are flattered at a most unconscionable rate, and loaded with the most extravagant praises. He calls the king his most dear, most excellent, and most sweet son; and tells him, that the archbishop was such an admirable prelate, that he was able to bring all the souls in his province from the very bottom of hell into the port of heaven [1].

Council of Cloveshoos.

Athelard, after his return from Rome with this curious letter, summoned a council to meet at Cloveshoos, A. D. 803; at which the decree of the pope, for restoring the see of Canterbury to all its ancient rights, was confirmed with great solemnity, and everlasting damnation denounced against all who should hereafter attempt to tear the coat of Christ, i. e. to divide the province of Canterbury [2]. The archbishop laid another decree of the pope's, against admitting laymen to the government of monasteries, before this council; which was also confirmed, and subscribed by him and his twelve suffragans, with several abbots and presbyters [3]. This last decree was designed to put a stop to a practice which had long prevailed, of noblemen having the government of the monasteries, and their ladies of the nunneries, on their estates, and to put those foundations entirely into the hands of ecclesiastics; by which a great accession, both of power and wealth, accrued to the church.

[1] Spelman Concil. t. 1. p. 322.
[2] Id. p. 324.
[3] Id. ibid.

Athelard

Athelard did not long ſurvive the reſtoration of his ſee to its ancient ſplendour; but dying A. D. 807, was ſucceeded by Wulfred, who had been a monk of Chriſt's church in Canterbury [4]. This prelate convened a council of all the biſhops, and many of the abbots and preſbyters of his province, at Ceale-hythe, July 27, A. D. 816; at which Kenulph king of Mercia, with the great men of his kingdom, were preſent. This council, in the preamble to its canons, is ſaid to have been called in the name, and by the authority of Jeſus Chriſt, the ſupreme head of the church; and the deſign of it is ſaid to have been, that the preſidents of the ſacred order, or biſhops, might treat with the abbots, prieſts, and deacons, concerning what was neceſſary and uſeful for the churches; which ſeems to intimate, that theſe inferior clergy were conſtituent members of this council [5]. The canons of this council are eleven in number; and ſome of them contain ſeveral curious particulars concerning the ſtate of religion in the church of England at this time. As the building of parochial churches was now become frequent, the ſecond canon preſcribes the manner of their conſecration, which is to be performed only by the biſhop of the dioceſe, who is to bleſs the holy water, and ſprinkle it on all things with his own hands, according to the directions in the book of rites. He is then to conſecrate the euchariſt, and to

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Council of Ceale-hythe.

4 Godwin de Præſul. Angl. p. 68. 5 Spel. Con. t. 1. p. 328.

Cent. IX. depoſit it, together with the relics, in the repoſitory provided for them. If no relics can be procured, the conſecrated elements may be ſufficient, becauſe they are the body and blood of Chriſt. Every biſhop in conſecrating a church is commanded to have the picture of the ſaint to whom the church is dedicated painted on the wall, or on a board [6]. From the fourth canon it appears, that the Engliſh biſhops at this time, not only enjoyed their epiſcopal juriſdiction over all the monaſteries and nunneries in their dioceſes in its full extent, but had alſo authority to appoint the abbots and abbeſſes, with the conſent of the members of theſe ſocieties: a proof that all the exemptions from epiſcopal juriſdiction, ſaid to have been procured from the pope by ſeveral monaſteries before this time, are mere forgeries. By the fifth canon, we diſcover, that the members of this council had a moſt violent averſion to the Scotch clergy; for they decree, that no Scotſman ſhall be allowed to baptize, to ſay maſs, to give the euchariſt to the people, or perform any part of the ſacerdotal office; becauſe (ſays the canon) it is not known by whom theſe Scotſmen were ordained, or whether they were ordained or not, ſince they came from a country where there was no metropolitan, and where very little regard was paid to other orders. By the ſixth canon, the decrees of former councils which have been ſigned with the ſign of the

[6] Spel. Con. p. 328.

croſs, are declared to be inviolable. By the ſeventh, biſhops and abbots are diſcharged from alienating any of their lands for more than one life, except it be to preſerve themſelves from famine, from ſlavery, or from the depredations of the enemy; by which is meant the Danes, who about this time grievouſly infeſted the coaſts of England, and were peculiarly terrible to the clergy. The tenth preſcribes what offices are to be performed at the death of a biſhop for the repoſe of his ſoul, viz. that the tenth part of all his moveable effects, both without and within doors, ſhall be given to the poor;—that all his Engliſh ſlaves ſhall be ſet at liberty;—that at the ſounding of the ſignal in the ſeveral pariſh-churches, the people of the pariſh ſhall repair to the church, and there ſay thirty pſalms for the ſoul of the deceaſed;—that every biſhop and abbot ſhall cauſe ſix hundred pſalms to be ſung, and one hundred and twenty maſſes to be celebrated, and ſhall ſet at liberty three ſlaves, and give each of them three ſhillings;—that all the ſervants of God ſhall faſt one day;—and that for thirty days immediately after divine ſervice in every church, ſeven belts of pater-noſters ſhall be ſung for him [7]. Theſe good-biſhops did certainly right to provide for the repoſe of their ſouls after death; but whether this was the moſt effectual way of doing it, is not quite ſo clear.

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7 Theſe belts or girdles had ſtuds for numbering the pater-noſters, as the roſaries or ſtrings of beads do at preſent.

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By the laſt canon of this council, prieſts are commanded to uſe dipping, and not ſprinkling, in the celebration of baptiſm. Several other councils were held under this primate; but as they were convened rather for terminating private diſputes about the patrimony of the church, than for making general laws and regulations for its government, they merit little attention [8].

The clergy cruelly treated by the Danes.

Wulfred archbiſhop of Canterbury died A. D. 830, and Theogildus abbot of Chriſt's church was choſen in his room; who ſurvived his predeceſſor only about three months, and was ſucceeded by Celnoth deacon of the ſame church [9]. In the time of this primate, the heptarchy ended, and the Engliſh monarchy was eſtabliſhed by the illuſtrious Egbert king of the Weſt-Saxons; though ſome princes after this bore the title of kings, and enjoyed ſome degree of authority, in Mercia, Northumberland, and other ſtates. This union of the ſeveral Engliſh ſtates into one potent kingdom was in many reſpects a happy event; and particularly to the church; becauſe the clergy were thereby delivered from the great inconveniency of being ſubject to different, and often contending ſovereigns. But the invaſions of the Danes, which about this time became more frequent and formidable than they had been before, more than overbalanced this advantage, and involved the Engliſh clergy in the

[8] Spel. Concil. t. 1. p. 331—336.

[9] Godwin de Præſul. Angl. p. 68.

moſt

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moſt deplorable calamities. For the Danes being Pagans, as well as ſavages, and finding the monaſteries, in which the clergy generally reſided, better ſtored with booty and proviſions than other places, never failed to plunder them when it was in their power. In thoſe calamitous times, therefore, we cannot expect to meet with many councils aſſembled for making eccleſiaſtical laws and regulations. Great numbers of the clergy were put to the ſword, or buried in the ruins of their monaſteries; and the mildeſt fate they could expect when they fell into the hands of the Danes was to be ſold for ſlaves. This made many of the monks abandon a profeſſion which expoſed them defenceleſs to ſo many dangers; ſome of them becoming ſoldiers, and others purſuing other ways of life. Thoſe who ſtill adhered to their profeſſion after the deſtruction of the monaſteries in which they had reſided, retired into country-villages, and there performed the duties of their function to the people of the neighbourhood. By this means the deſtruction of the monaſteries, and diſperſion of the clergy by the Danes, became the occaſion of the building of many pariſh-churches, of which there were but very few in England before this time. This diſperſion of the clergy was productive alſo of a very important change in their manners and way of life. When great numbers of them had formerly lived together in one monaſtery, few of them were married, becauſe a collegiate life is on many accounts unfavourable to matrimony; but after

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they were diſperſed, and blended with the people, they generally embraced a married life, as moſt convenient and comfortable in their ſituation [10]. Theſe obſervations are ſo undeniably true, that before the end of this century there was hardly a monaſtery or a monk, and but few unmarried clergymen in England.

Ethelwolf's grant to the church.

Ethelwolf, the eldeſt ſurviving ſon of Egbert, the firſt monarch of England, who ſucceeded his father in the throne A. D. 837, had been deſigned for the church, and was actually a ſubdeacon in the cathedral of Wincheſter, if we may believe the author quoted below [11], when his father died. This prince did not forget his former friends and brethren of the clergy after his advancement to the throne, but continued to give them many ſubſtantial marks of his favour; of which the moſt conſiderable was, his famous grant of the tenth of all his lands to the church. The Chriſtian clergy in England, as well as in other countries, began pretty early to claim the tenth of every thing, as the proportion ſettled by the Levitical law for the maintenance of the miniſters of religion; but it required a long time, and many laws, both of church and ſtate, to make this claim effectual. In the ſeventh and eighth centuries, the Engliſh clergy had been ſupported,—by the produce of the lands which had been given to the church by kings, and other great men,—by a church ſcot or tax of one

[10] Inett's Church Hiſtory, c. 17. [11] Anglia Sacra, t. 1. p. 200.

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Saxon penny on every houſe that was worth thirty Saxon pence of yearly rent,—and by the voluntary oblations of the people. Theſe funds, in times of plenty and tranquillity, were abundantly ſufficient; but in thoſe times of war and confuſion, when their houſes were burnt, and their ſlaves, who cultivated their lands, killed, or carried away by the Danes, when the church-ſcot could not be regularly levied, and when the voluntary oblations of the people failed, the clergy were reduced to great diſtreſs and indigence. Ethelwolf, who was a religious prince, and ſeems to have placed his chief hopes of being preſerved from that deſtruction with which he was threatened by the Danes in the prayers of the church, was deſirous of delivering the clergy from their preſent diſtreſs, and of providing more ample and certain funds for their future ſupport. With this view, he called an aſſembly of all the great men of his hereditary kingdom of Weſſex, both of the clergy and laity, at Wincheſter, in November A. D. 844; and, with their conſent, made a ſolemn grant to the church of the tenth part of all the lands belonging to the crown, free from all taxes and impoſitions of every kind, even from the three obligations, of building bridges, fortifying and defending caſtles, and marching out on military expeditions [12]. It was no doubt intended that this royal grant ſhould be imitated, and probably it was imitated,

[12] Anglia Sacra, t. 1. p. 200.

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by the nobility. In return for this noble donation, the clergy were obliged to perform some additional duties, viz. to meet with their people every Wednesday in the church, and there to sing fifty psalms, and celebrate two masses, one for king Ethelwolf, and another for the nobility, who had consented to this grant[13]. What immediate benefit the clergy reaped from this donation, we are not well informed; though it is probable, that it was not very great, as a regulation of this kind could hardly be carried into execution in those distracted times.

Ethelwolf's journey to Rome.

Though the presence of a prince with his people was never more necessary than in the reign of Ethelwolf, when his territories were every moment in danger of being invaded by the most cruel and destructive foes; yet this prince, prompted by the prevailing superstition of that age, left his kingdom in great confusion, and went to Rome, A. D. 854; where he spent much money in presents to the pope, the clergy, and the churches[14].

Further grant to the church.

After his return from Rome, he enlarged his former grant to the church, by extending it to the other kingdoms which now composed the English monarchy. This was done in a great council at Winchester, A. D. 855; at which, besides Ethelwolf, Beorred, the tributary king of Mercia, and Edmund, the tributary king of East-Anglia, the two archbishops of Canterbury

13 Anglia Sacra, t. 1. p. 200. 14 Chron. Saxon. A. D. 854.

and

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and York, with all the other biſhops, the nobility, and chief clergy of England, were preſent [15]. To give the greater force and ſolemnity to this donation, the charter containing the grant of it was preſented by king Ethelwolf, in the preſence of the whole aſſembly, on the altar of St. Peter the apoſtle, in the cathedral of Winchester; and all the biſhops were commanded to ſend a copy of it to every church in their reſpective dioceſes [16]. But notwithſtanding all theſe ſolemnities, we have good reaſon to believe the intention of this famous grant was in a great meaſure fruſtrated, by the vague indeterminate ſtrain in which it was conceived, and the deplorable confuſions which ſoon after followed.

Calamities of the clergy, and their relief.

England was a ſcene of ſo much miſery and confuſion during the ſhort reigns of Ethelwolf's three eldeſt ſons, from A. D. 857 to A. D. 871, and the firſt ſeven years of the reign of his youngeſt ſon Alfred the Great, that little attention was given to eccleſiaſtical affairs. In this period the few remaining monaſteries which had eſcaped the former ravages of the Danes, were deſtroyed, and their wretched inhabitants put to the ſword, or burnt in the flames which conſumed the places of their abode [17]. But after the glorious victory which Alfred the Great obtained over the Danes A. D. 878, ſome ſtop was put to the horrid cruelties of thoſe barba-

[15] Spel. Concil. t. 1. p. 348.
[16] Id. ibid.
[17] Ingulf. Hiſt. Croiland.

rians,

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give a myſterious ſolemnity to the rites of religion, in the holy time of lent, by drawing a curtain before the altar when they celebrated maſs. But the people, it ſeems, did not like to be kept on the outſide of the curtain, and were apt to turn it aſide, or pull it down; which is therefore prohibited under a ſevere penalty. By another we are informed, that ſervants, but not ſlaves, were allowed forty-two days in the year to work for themſelves, and not for their maſters [20].

Alfred rebuilds monaſteries.

One of the firſt cares of the illuſtrious Alfred, after he had reſtored peace and proſperity to his afflicted country, was, to repair the ruined churches and monaſteries, and even to build new ones. But many of the old Engliſh monks having periſhed in the late troubles, and the riſing generation having contracted an averſion to that way of life, from the dreadful tales they had heard of their ſufferings, he was obliged to bring monks from France and other foreign countries [21]. When the peace was better eſtabliſhed, and their fears of the future invaſions of the Danes abated, many of the clergy who had abandoned their monaſteries to preſerve their lives, returned to the places from whence they had fled, took poſſeſſion of their lands, and began to repair their churches and habitations. But many of theſe clergymen having married in their retreats, they brought their wives and

[20] Spel. Concil. t. 1. p. 371. [21] Aſſerius Vita Elfred. p. 18.

children

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children with them when they returned to their monaſteries; by which means the abbeys of England, in the end of this and the beginning of the next century, were generally poſſeſſed by a kind of ſecular or married monks [22]. This, as we ſhall ſoon ſee, became the occaſion of long and violent contentions in the church of England. Alfred the Great, after he had reſtored peace and good order to his country, ended his glorious life and reign in the laſt year of the ninth century.

Eccleſiaſtical hiſtory of the Britons.

It would be improper to ſwell this work with a laborious collection of the unconnected ſcraps of the eccleſiaſtical hiſtory of the Britons, Scots, and Picts, in this century; out of which it is quite impoſſible to form any thing like a continued narration, ſupported by proper evidence. ——All that we know with certainty of the ſtate of religion among the ancient Britons in this period is, that all thoſe who preſerved their civil liberty, preſerved alſo their religious independency; and none of them were in communion with, or in ſubjection to, the church of England, who were not ſubject to ſome Engliſh prince. By living in this ſequeſtered ſtate, without much communication with other churches, they ſtill retained, for the moſt part, their ancient uſages, and were unacquainted with many innovations which had been imported from Rome into the church of England.

[22] Anglia Sacra, t. 1. p. 602.

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Of the Scots and Picts.

The Scots and Picts were very much in the same circumstances with the Britons in this respect. Ever since the violent disputes between the Scots and English of the Roman communion, about the time of keeping Easter, and the retreat of the Scotch clergy out of England, there had been a violent animosity between the churches of England and Scotland. This animosity was very strong in this century, as appears from the fifth canon of the council of Ceale-hythe, A. D. 816; which decrees, that no Scotch priest shall be allowed to perform any duty of his function in England [23]. The Scots and Picts were instructed and governed by their own clergy; who being educated at home, and having little intercourse with foreign nations, retained much of the plainness and simplicity of the primitive times in their forms of worship. These clergy were called *Kuldees*, both before and after this period: a name which some derive from the two Latin words, *Cultores Dei*, and others from the kills or cells in which they lived [24]. They were a kind of presbyters, who lived in small societies, and travelled over the neighbouring countries, preaching, and administering the sacraments. In each of these cells there was one who had some kind of superintendency over the rest, managed their affairs, and directed their missions; but whether or not he enjoyed the title and authority of a

[23] Spel. Concil. t. 1. p. 329.

[24] Boeth. Hist. Scot. l. 6. Camb. Britan. col. 1468.

bishop

bishop in this period, is not certainly known. The council of Ceale-hythe seems to have suspected that he did not; for the chief reasons assigned by that council for refusing to keep communion with these Scotch Kuldees were,—That they had no metropolitans amongst them,—paid little regard to other orders,—and that the council did not know by whom they were ordained, i. e. whether they were ordained by bishops or not [25]. The rectors or bishops of the several cells of Kuldees were both chosen, and ordained, or consecrated, by the members of these societies; which was probably the very thing with which the council of Ceale-hythe was dissatisfied. When the cells or monasteries of Scotland came to be enlarged, better built, and better endowed, they were long after this possessed by these Kuldees, or secular clergy, who had the privilege of chusing the bishops in those places where bishops sees were established [26].

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State of the Scotch bishops.

The only bishopric that was founded in Scotland in the ninth century was that of St. Andrew's; whose first bishop, named *Adrian*, was killed by the Danes in the isle of May, A. D. 872, and succeeded by Kellach, the second bishop of that see [27]. The other bishops of Scotland in this century, and in former times, were not fixed to any particular diocese, and performed all the offices of their functions in all

[25] Spel. Concil. t. 1. p. 359.
[26] Boeth. Hist. Scot. l. 10.
[27] Spottiswood's Church Hist. p. 25, 26.

places

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24 Boeth. Hist. Scot. l. 6. Camb. Britan. col. 1468.

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State of the Scotch biſhops.

The only biſhopric that was founded in Scotland in the ninth century was that of St. Andrew's; whoſe firſt biſhop, named *Adrian*, was killed by the Danes in the iſle of May, A. D. 872, and ſucceeded by Kellach, the ſecond biſhop of that ſee [27]. The other biſhops of Scotland in this century, and in former times, were not fixed to any particular dioceſe, and performed all the offices of their functions in all

[25] Spel. Concil. t. 1. p. 329. [26] Boeth. Hiſt. Scot. l. 10.
[27] Spottiſwood's Church Hiſt. p. 25, 26.

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places without diſtinction[28]. The number of theſe itinerant unſettled biſhops was probably very ſmall, as our moſt diligent antiquaries have not been able to collect the names of above ten or twelve of them in the ſpace of ſix centuries; and of theſe few ſome were foreigners, ſent into Scotland on particular occaſions, as Regulus, Palladius, Servanus; others were Scotchmen, who were biſhops in foreign countries, as Wiro, Plachelmus, &c.; and others were undeniably only ſuperintendants of ſocieties of Kuldees, as Columba, Adamnan, &c[29].

Scotch councils.

We may very reaſonably ſuppoſe, that the kings both of the Scots and Picts held ſeveral councils in this and the preceding centuries, for the regulation of eccleſiaſtical affairs; but of theſe no monuments are now remaining, except ſome faint veſtiges of a council or aſſembly held by Kenneth Macalpin, the firſt monarch of the Scots and Picts, A. D. 850[30]. In this council ſeveral civil and eccleſiaſtical laws are ſaid to have been made. By one of theſe laſt it is decreed, that altars, churches, cells, oratories, images of ſaints, prieſts, and all perſons in holy orders, ſhall be held in great veneration. By another it is ordained, that all faſts, feſtivals, vigils, holidays, and ceremonies of every kind, which human piety had decreed to be kept in honour of king Chriſt, and his holy militia, ſhall

[28] Boeth. l. 10.

[29] See the table of Scotch biſhops at the end of Spottiſwood's Church Hiſtory.

[30] Fordun, l. 4. c. 8. Boeth. l. 10.

be ſtrictly obſerved. By a third it is declared to be a capital crime to do the leaſt injury to a prieſt, either by word or deed [31]. But we have good reaſon to ſuſpect the genuineneſs and antiquity of theſe canons, which were probably the work of a later age, when ſuperſtition and prieſtcraft had made greater progreſs in Scotland [32]. Cent. IX.

SECTION V.

The hiſtory of Religion in Great Britain, from A. D. 900, *to* A. D. 1066.

THE tenth century (which is commonly called *the age of lead*) was the moſt dark and diſmal period of that long night of ignorance and ſuperſtition in which Europe was involved, after the fall of the Roman empire. It is difficult to determine whether the impudence of the clergy, or the credulity of the laity, were moſt remarkable in thoſe unhappy times; but it is certain, that the former could hardly invent any thing too abſurd for the latter to believe. Cent. X. Character of the tenth century.

England, which towards the end of the laſt century had been illuminated by ſome faint rays of knowledge, and enjoyed a ſhort interval of tranquillity, under the influence of the illuſtrious Alfred, in the beginning of this ſunk into the State of religion in England.

[31] Spelm. Con. p. 342.

[32] Sir David Dalrymple's Hiſtorical Memorials, p. 2. note.

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deepeſt darkneſs, and was involved in the greateſt confuſion. This aroſe from the wars occaſioned by a diſputed ſucceſſion—from the frequent revolts of the Danes ſettled in England, —and from the no leſs frequent invaſions of their countrymen from abroad. In the midſt of ſo many wars, it is no wonder that the intereſts of learning and religion were too much neglected.

Story of an interdict.

It was perhaps owing to this that king Edward the Elder, the ſon and ſucceſſor of Alfred, allowed ſome biſhoprics to continue vacant ſeveral years; for which, it is pretended, pope Formoſus laid both him and his kingdom under an interdict, A. D. 905[1]. This ſtory of the interdict, it muſt be confeſſed, is attended with ſuch difficulties as render it very doubtful, if not quite incredible. Pope Formoſus was in his grave eight years before the time of this pretended interdict; and the biſhops of Rome had not then become ſuch cruel audacious tyrants as to deprive whole kingdoms of the means of ſalvation, for the fault of one man[2]. It is not improbable, that king Edward received an admonition from Rome; which the monkiſh hiſtorians in ſucceeding ages magnified into an interdict.

Edward fills the vacant ſees, and erects new ones.

However this may be, that prince, as ſoon as the exigencies of his affairs permitted, not only filled up all the vacant biſhoprics in his kingdom of Weſſex, but erected new ones, at Wells,

[1] W. Malmſ. l. 2. p. 26. [2] See Inett's Church Hiſt. c. 18.

at

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at Kirton in Devonshire, and at Padstow in Cornwall; and Plegmund archbishop of Canterbury consecrated no fewer than seven bishops in one day, A. D. 909, viz. Fridstan of Wincheſter, Wereſtan of Shereburn, Kenulp of Dorceſter, Beornock of Selſey, Athelm of Wells, Eadulph of Kirton, and Athelſtan of Padſtow [3].

Apoſtaſy and recovery of the Danes.

The Danes of Eaſt-Anglia and Northumberland, who, with their leader Guthrum, had ſubmitted to king Alfred, and had embraced the Chriſtian religion, remained tolerably faithful to their new religion, and to their new ſovereign, during the life of that great prince; but after his death they apoſtatized from Chriſtianity, as well as rebelled againſt his ſon and ſucceſſor Edward. But having reduced theſe apoſtates and rebels to the neceſſity of ſubmitting to his authority A. D. 909, he compelled them to return to the profeſſion of the Chriſtian religion, and to the obedience of thoſe laws which his father had preſcribed to their anceſtors about thirty years before [4].

Council of Gratanlea.

We meet with few eccleſiaſtical tranſactions of importance for near twenty years after this; when a great council was aſſembled at Gratanlea, A. D. 928, by king Athelſtan, in which Wulphelm archbiſhop of Canterbury preſided. This was one of thoſe mixed aſſemblies, ſo frequent in the Saxon times, conſiſting of all the great men,

[3] Anglia Sacra, t. 1. p. 554, 555.

[4] Spel. Concil. p. 390. Wilkin Concil. t. 1. p. 205.

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both of the clergy and laity, in which both civil laws and eccleſiaſtical canons were made. For beſides the archbiſhop and other biſhops, we are told, that a great number of nobles and wiſe men, who had been called by king Athelſtan, were preſent at this great ſynod; and in the acts of it we find civil and eccleſiaſtical matters ſometimes blended together in the ſame law[5]. The firſt canon of this council reſpects the payment of tithes, and is couched in the following terms: —"I king Athelſtan, by the advice of Wulphelm, my archbiſhop, and of my other biſhops, ſtrictly command and charge you all my reeves, in all parts of my kingdom, in the name of God and his ſaints, and as you value my favour, to pay the tithes, both of the cattle and corn, on all my lands: and I further ordain, that all my biſhops and aldermen ſhall pay the tithes of their lands; and that they ſhall give it in charge to all who are under their juriſdiction to do the ſame. All this I command to be carried into execution by the time appointed, which is the day of the decollation of John the Baptiſt." From this canon it appears, that the famous grant of king Ethelwolf, of the tenth part of his lands to the church, if it did not originally mean the tenth of their produce, was now underſtood in this ſenſe, either by tacit conſent and cuſtom, or by ſome law which is now loſt. It is further

5 Spel. Concil. t. 1. p. 401.

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evident from this canon, to which a pathetic exhortation is ſubjoined, that all former laws for the payment of tithes had been ineffectual; and we ſhall ſoon ſee cauſe to think, that this one was not much better obeyed.——By the ſecond canon, in one of the copies of this council, it is decreed, that the church-ſcot ſhall ſtill be paid where it is due[6]. From whence we may learn, that the clergy did not relinquiſh any of their former revenues when they obtained the grant of tithes. In the third canon, the king, for the forgiveneſs of his ſins, and ſalvation of his ſoul, commands each of his reeves to maintain one poor Engliſhman from every two of his farms, by giving him one amber of meal, one hog, or one ram, worth four pence, every month, and one mantle, or thirty pence, annually, for his clothing. By two of theſe canons, the various religious ceremonies are preſcribed, which were to be obſerved in performing the ſeveral kinds of ordeal, which ſhall be more particularly deſcribed hereafter[7]. By the ninth canon it is decreed, that fairs and markets ſhall not be kept on the Lord's day. The tenth enumerates both the ſpiritual and ſecular duties of biſhops; which are ſuch as theſe,—That they ſhould teach their clergy how they ought to act in all circumſtances;—to promote peace and concord, and co-operate with ſuch ſecular judges as were friends to juſtice;—to take care that oaths be

[6] Spel. Concil. t. 1. p. 402.

[7] See chap. 3.

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rightly adminiſtered, and the ordeals duly performed;—to viſit their flocks, and not ſuffer the devil to deſtroy any of their ſheep;—to keep the ſtandards of the weights and meaſures of their reſpective dioceſes, and take care that all conformed to theſe ſtandards;—to be preſent with the aldermen in their courts, to prevent any ſprouts of pravity from ſpringing up;—not to permit the powerful to oppreſs the weak, or maſters to uſe their ſlaves ill;—and that they ſhould fix the meaſures of work to be performed by ſlaves in all their dioceſes. By the twelfth canon it is decreed, that fifty pſalms ſhall be ſung for the king every Friday in every monaſtery and cathedral church [8]. With theſe eccleſiaſtical laws, ſeveral others of a civil nature are intermixed, which will be more properly conſidered in another place [9].

Death of archbiſhop Wulphelm, and ſucceſſion of Odo.

Though Athelſtan was almoſt conſtantly engaged in war, he held at leaſt four other councils, at the four following places, viz. Exeter, Feverſham, Thunderfield, and London; but the canons of all theſe councils are either loſt, or ſo blended with thoſe of Gratanlea, that they cannot be diſtinguiſhed [10]. Wulphelm archbiſhop of Canterbury died A. D. 934, and was ſucceeded in that high ſtation by Odo biſhop of Shereburn; whoſe hiſtory is remarkable enough, without the thundering miracles with which it

[8] Spel. Concil. t. 1. p. 402.
[9] Chap. 3.
[10] Spel. Concil. p. 407.

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is adorned by his biographer [11]. He was the eldeſt ſon of a noble and wealthy Dane ſettled in Eaſt-Anglia, by whom, being a bigoted Pagan, he was diſinherited, and turned out of doors, for frequenting the Chriſtian churches when he was a boy. In this extremity, he took ſhelter in the family of Athelm, an Engliſh nobleman of the firſt rank; who was ſo charmed with his ſpirit and ingenuity, that he treated him with parental tenderneſs, and gave him a learned education. Having entered into holy orders, by his own merit, and the intereſt of his patron Athelm, he paſſed rapidly through the inferior ſtations in the church, and was ordained a prieſt before the age preſcribed by the canons, and not long after conſecrated biſhop of Shereburn. In this office he behaved with the greateſt piety and prudence; and being of a martial ſpirit, he attended his ſovereign king Athelſtan in the field, and contributed not a little to the gaining the great victory of Brunanburgh over the Danes. On the death of Wulphelm, all the world turned their eyes on the learned, pious, and valiant biſhop of Shereburn, as the fitteſt perſon to fill the vacant chair; of which he at length accepted, after having made a few wry faces and very frivolous objections. His chief objection, if we may believe the monkiſh hiſtorians, was, that he was not a monk, as all the former archbiſhops had

[11] Anglia Sacra, t. 2. p. 78.

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been. But we can hardly ſuppoſe this prelate ſo ignorant of church-hiſtory, as to make this objection, which was probably invented for him long after his death, by thoſe cloyſtered annaliſts, who neglected no opportunity of magnifying their own order. However this may be, though Odo's zeal for religion ſeems ſtill to have been ſincere and fervent, his bold aſpiring ſpirit, no longer under any reſtraint, made him act the primate with a very high hand. This appears, not only from his actions, eſpecially in his old age, but alſo from his famous paſtoral letter to the clergy and people of his province (commonly called *the conſtitutions of Odo*), which was publiſhed A. D. 943; in which he ſpeaks in a very magiſterial tone: "I ſtrictly command "and charge," ſays he, "that no man pre- "ſume to lay any tax on the poſſeſſions of the "clergy, who are the ſons of God, and the "ſons of God ought to be free from all taxes "in every kingdom.——If any man dares to "diſobey the diſcipline of the church in this "particular, he is more wicked and impudent "than the ſoldiers who crucified Chriſt.——I "command the king, the princes, and all in "authority, to obey, with great humility, the "archbiſhops and biſhops; for they have the "keys of the kingdom of heaven[12]," &c.

Council of London.

Beſides theſe conſtitutions, that were publiſhed by the ſole authority of the archbiſhop, there

[12] Spel. Concil. t. 1. p. 416. Wilkin Concil. t. 1. p. 212.

were

were ſeveral eccleſiaſtical canons made in a great council, both of the clergy and laity, which was held by king Edmund, at London, A. D. 944. By the firſt of theſe canons it is decreed, that all who are in holy orders, from whom the people of God were to expect a virtuous example, ſhould live chaſtely; and that thoſe who violated this canon ſhould forfeit all their goods, and be denied Chriſtian burial. This canon was perhaps aimed againſt the ſecular canons or monks, who were generally married, and deſigned as a prelude to thoſe violent efforts that were ſoon after made to diſpoſſeſs them of their monaſteries on that account. By the ſecond canon of this council, all are commanded to pay their tithes, their church-ſcot, and alms-fee, under the penalty of excommunication. From this we learn, that beſides tithes there were ſeveral other dues claimed by the clergy. By one canon, uncleanneſs with a nun is declared to be an equal crime with adultery, and ſubjected to the ſame penalties. By another, biſhops are commanded to repair and decorate the churches on their own lands at their own expence, and to admoniſh the king to do the ſame to other churches. Though Chriſtianity had been now long eſtabliſhed in England, Paganiſm was far from being quite extirpated, eſpecially amongſt the Danes ſettled in Eaſt-Anglia and Northumberland; and therefore there were laws made in almoſt every eccleſiaſtical ſynod againſt the uſe of Pagan rites, which were often practiſed even by

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by thoſe who were a kind of nominal Chriſtians. By the laſt canon of this council, thoſe who were guilty of perjury, or of uſing Pagan rites and ceremonies, are to be excommunicated [13].

Canons of the Northumbrian prieſts.

About the middle of this century, as it is moſt probable, an eccleſiaſtical ſynod of the province of York was held; in which the fines to be paid by the clergy, for various offences, and violations of the canons of the church, are aſcertained. To ſecure the payment of theſe fines, every clergyman, at his admiſſion into orders, was obliged to find twelve bondſmen. As the province of York, or kingdom of Northumberland, was at this time chiefly inhabited by Danes, theſe fines are all to be paid in the Daniſh oras, or ounces of ſilver; and conſidering the great ſcarcity of that precious metal, they are very ſevere, as will appear from a few examples: "If a prieſt celebrate maſs in an unhallowed houſe, let him pay twelve oras. If a prieſt celebrate maſs on an unhallowed altar, let him pay twelve oras. If a prieſt conſecrate the ſacramental wine in a wooden chalice, let him pay twelve oras. If a prieſt celebrate maſs without wine, let him pay twelve oras." Theſe fines, and many others, were to be paid to the biſhop of the dioceſe. This ſeems to have been a ſcheme to bring the diſcipline of the church to a perfect conformity with the laws of the ſtate, which ſet a fixed price

[13] Spel. Concil. t. 1. p. 420. Wilkin Concil. t. 1. p. 214.

on

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on all crimes; and was probably invented by ſome artful prelate, to make the delinquencies of his clergy the means of his wealth[14].

History of St. Dunſtan.

It is now time to introduce the celebrated St. Dunſtan to the acquaintance of our readers, who was already become very famous, and ſoon after acted a moſt memorable part, both in the affairs of church and ſtate. In doing which, we ſhall give them a ſhort ſpecimen of the monkiſh manner of writing the lives of ſaints. Dunſtan was deſcended from a noble family in Weſſex, and educated in the abbey of Glaſtonbury. Here he ſtudied ſo hard, that it threw him into a violent fever, which brought him to the very point of death. When the whole family were ſtanding about his bed, diſſolved in tears, and expecting every moment to ſee him expire, an angel came from heaven in a dreadful ſtorm, and gave him a medicine, which reſtored him to perfect health in a moment. Dunſtan immediately ſtarted from his bed, and run with all his ſpeed towards the church, to return thanks for his recovery; but the devil met him by the way, ſurrounded by a great multitude of black dogs, and endeavoured to obſtruct his paſſage. This would have frightened ſome boys; but it had no ſuch effect upon Dunſtan; who pronouncing a ſacred name, and brandiſhing his ſtick, put the devil and all his dogs to flight. The church-

[14] Wilkin Concil. t. 1. p. 218. Johnſon's Canons, vol. 1. A. D. 950.

doors

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doors being shut, an angel took him in his arms, conveyed him through an opening in the roof, and set him softly down on the floor, where he performed his devotions. After his recovery, he pursued his studies with the greatest ardour, and soon became a perfect master in philosophy, divinity, music, painting, writing, sculpture, working in gold, silver, brass, and iron, &c. When he was still very young, he entered into holy orders, and was introduced by his uncle Athelm archbishop of Canterbury to king Athelstan; who, charmed with his person and accomplishments, retained him in his court, and employed him in many great affairs. At leisure hours he used to entertain the king and his courtiers with playing on his harp, or some other musical instrument; and now and then he wrought a miracle, which gained him great admiration. His old enemy the devil was much offended at this, and prompted some envious courtiers to persuade the king, that his favourite was a magician; which that prince too readily believed. Dunstan, discovering by the king's countenance that he had lost his favour, and resolving to resign, rather than be turned out, retired from court to another uncle, who was bishop of Winchester. This good prelate prevailed upon his nephew to forsake the world, and become a monk; after which he retired to a little cell built against the church-wall of Glastonbury. Here he slept, studied, prayed, meditated, and sometimes amused himself with forging

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forging ſeveral uſeful things in braſs and iron. One evening, as he was working very buſily at his forge, the devil, putting on the appearance of a man, thruſt his head in at the window of his cell, and aſked him to make ſomething or other for him. Dunſtan was ſo intent upon his work, that he made no anſwer; on which the devil began to ſwear and talk obſcenely; which betrayed the lurking fiend. The holy blackſmith, putting up a ſecret ejaculation, pulled his tongs, which were red hot, out of the fire, ſeized the devil with them by the noſe, and ſqueezed him with all his ſtrength; which made his infernal majeſty roar and ſcold at ſuch a rate, that he awakened and terrified all the people for many miles around [15]. This, it is preſumed, will be thought a ſufficient ſpecimen of the monkiſh manner of writing hiſtory: it is now proper to purſue the ſtory of Dunſtan in a more rational ſtrain.

Continuation of the hiſtory of St. Dunſtan.

This extraordinary perſon was recalled to court by king Edmund A. D. 941; who beſtowed upon him the rich abbey of Glaſtonbury, which, for his ſake, he honoured with many peculiar privileges [16]. He enjoyed a very high degree of the favour of this prince during his ſhort reign of ſix years; but he ſtood much higher in the favour of his brother and ſucceſſor king Edred, to whom he was confeſſor, chief confident, and

15 Anglia Sacra, t. 2. p. 97.

16 W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 7. Anglia Sacra, t. 2. p. 100.

prime

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prime minister. He employed all his influence during this period of court-favour in promoting the interest of the monks of the Benedictine order, to which he belonged, and of which he was a most active and zealous patron. Having the treasures of these two princes, especially of the last, very much at his command, he lavished them away in building and endowing monasteries for these monks, because almost all the old monasteries were in the possession of secular canons. Not contented with this, he persuaded Edred (who was a bigoted valetudinary) to bestow such immense treasures on the churches and monasteries by his last will, that the crown was stripped of its most valuable possessions, and left in a state of indigence [17].

Further continuation.

This conduct of Dunstan while he was in power, rendered him very odious to Edwi, who succeeded his uncle Edred A. D. 955; and his rude behaviour to himself, and his beloved queen Elgiva, raised the resentment of that prince so high, that he deprived him of all his preferments, and drove him into exile [18]. The banishment of Dunstan, the great patron, or (as Malmsbury calls him) the prince of monks, was a severe blow to that order, who were expelled from several monasteries; which were made the impure stables (according to the same author) of the married clergy [19]. But their sufferings were

17 Inett's Church Hist. vol. 1. p. 316. 18 W. Malms. l. 2. c. 7.
19 Id. ibid.

not

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not of long continuance. For Edgar, the younger brother of Edwi, having raiſed a ſucceſsful rebellion againſt his unhappy brother, and uſurped all his dominions on the north ſide of the river Thames, recalled Dunſtan, and gave him the biſhopric of Worceſter, A. D. 957 [20]. From this moment he was the chief confident and prime miniſter of king Edgar, who became ſole monarch of England A. D. 959, by the death of his elder brother Edwi.

St. Dunſtan raiſed to the ſee of Canterbury.

Odo archbiſhop of Canterbury having died about two years before king Edwi, Elfin biſhop of Wincheſter, by the influence of that prince, was tranſlated to Canterbury; but died not long after in his way to Rome [21]. On this ſecond vacancy, Edwi procured the election of Brithelm biſhop of Wells; who was hardly warm in his ſeat, when Edgar ſucceeded to his brother's dominions, and obliged the new archbiſhop (who was of a ſoft and gentle diſpoſition) to relinquiſh his high ſtation, and return to his former biſhopric. This violence was practiſed by king Edgar, to make way for his favourite Dunſtan; who was accordingly raiſed to be archbiſhop of Canterbury A. D. 960 [22]. Being now poſſeſſed of the primacy, and aſſured of the royal ſupport and aſſiſtance, he prepared to execute the grand deſign which he had long meditated, of compelling the ſecular canons to put away their

[20] Anglia Sacra, t. 1. p. 107. [21] Godwin de Præſul. Ang. p. 73.
[22] Id. ibid.

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wives, and become monks; or of driving them out, and introducing Benedictine monks in their room [23]. With this view, he procured the promotion of Oſwald to the ſee of Worceſter, and of Ethelwald to that of Wincheſter; two prelates who were monks themſelves, and animated with the moſt ardent zeal for the advancement of their order.

The married canons ejected.

St. Dunſtan, St. Oſwald, and St. Ethelwald, the three great champions of the monks, and enemies of the married clergy, began the execution of their deſign, by endeavouring to perſuade the ſecular canons in their cathedrals, and other monaſteries, to put away their wives, and take the monaſtic vows and habits [24]. But finding that theſe perſuaſions produced little or no effect, they proceeded to the moſt ſhameful acts of fraud and violence. St. Oſwald (as we are told by a monkiſh hiſtorian) turned all the married canons out of his cathedral church of Worceſter, not by direct force, but by a moſt holy and pious ſtratagem, which he hath not thought fit to mention [25]. He expelled the married clergy out of ſeven other monaſteries within his dioceſe, and filled them with monks, allowing thoſe who were expelled a ſmall penſion for life, barely ſufficient to keep them from ſtarving [26]. Ethelwald acted with ſtill greater violence, if poſſible, towards the canons of his cathedral. For having

23 Anglia Sacra, t. 1. p. 219.
24 Id. t. 2. p. 219.
25 W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 8.
26 Anglia Sacra, t. 2. p. 200.

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ſecretly provided a ſufficient number of monkiſh habits, he entered the church one day, followed by a number of ſervants carrying them, and, with a ſtern countenance, told the canons who were performing divine ſervice, that they muſt inſtantly put on theſe habits, and take the vows, or be turned out. The poor canons pleaded hard for a little time to conſider of this cruel alternative; but the unrelenting prelate would not allow them one moment. A few complied, and took the habits; but the far greateſt number choſe rather to become beggars and vagabonds, than forſake their wives and children; for which our monkiſh hiſtorians give them the moſt opprobrious names [27]. To countenance theſe cruel tyrannical proceedings, Dunſtan and his aſſociates repreſented the married clergy as monſters of wickedneſs for cohabiting with their wives, magnified celibacy as the only ſtate becoming the ſanctity of the ſacerdotal office, and propagated a thouſand lies of miracles and viſions to its honour; of which the reader may take the following ſpecimen. A monk, named *Floberht*, who had been appointed abbot of Perſhore, a monaſtery out of which the ſecular canons had been turned by St. Oſwald, was a moſt prodigious zealot for the monaſtic inſtitutions; but in other reſpects of a very indifferent character. This abbot fell ſick, and died; and when all the monks of his own monaſtery, with Germanus

[27] Anglia Sacra, t. 2. p. 219. W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 8.

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abbot of Winchelcomb, and many others, were ſtanding about his corpſe, to their great aſtoniſhment, he raiſed himſelf up, and looked around him. All the monks were ſtruck with terror, and fled, except Germanus; who aſked his brother-abbot, What he had ſeen? and what had brought him back to life? To which the other anſwered, That he had been introduced into heaven by St. Benedict; that God had pardoned all his ſins for the merits of his beloved darling Oſwald biſhop of Worceſter; and had ſent him back to acquaint the world, that Oſwald was one of the greateſt ſaints that ever lived. Being aſked further by Germanus, What kind of figure St. Benedict made in heaven? how he was dreſſed? and how he was attended? he anſwered, That St. Benedict was one of the handſomeſt and beſt dreſſed ſaints in heaven, ſhining with precious ſtones, and attended by innumerable multitudes of monks and nuns, who were all perfect beauties [28]. This, it muſt be confeſſed, was a very ſimple tale; but it was well enough calculated to anſwer the purpoſes for which it was invented, in that age of ignorance and credulity. By theſe and various other arts, Dunſtan archbiſhop of Canterbury, Oſwald biſhop of Worceſter, and Ethelwald biſhop of Wincheſter, in the courſe of a few years, filled no fewer than forty-eight monaſteries with monks of the Benedictine order [29].

[28] Anglia Sacra, t. 2. p. 201.

[29] Id. ibid. p. 201.

Though

Though Edgar the Peaceable was a very profligate prince, and ſtuck at nothing to gratify his own paſſions, he was, if poſſible, a greater perſecutor of the married clergy than the three clerical tyrants above mentioned. To them he gave a formal commiſſion, A. D. 969, to expel the married canons out of all the cathedrals and larger monaſteries, promiſing to aſſiſt them in the execution of it with all his power [30]. On this occaſion he made a moſt flaming ſpeech to the three commiſſioners, painting the manners of the married clergy in the moſt odious colours; calling upon them to exert all their power, in conjunction with him, to exterminate thoſe abominable wretches who kept wives. "I know," ſays he, in the concluſion of his ſpeech, "O holy "father Dunſtan! that you have not encouraged "thoſe criminal practices of the clergy. You "have reaſoned, intreated, threatened. From "words it is now time to come to blows. All "the power of the crown is at your command. "Your brethren, the venerable Ethelwald, and "the moſt reverend Oſwald, will aſſiſt you. "To you three I commit the execution of this "important work. Strike boldly;—drive thoſe "irregular livers out of the church of Chriſt, "and introduce others, who will live accord-"ing to rule [31]." This furious champion for chaſtity had, ſome time before the delivery of this harangue, debauched, or rather raviſhed, a

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King Edgar a great perſecutor of the married canons.

30 Hoveden. Annal. ad ann. 969. 31 Spel. Concil. t. 1. p. 478.

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nun, a young lady of noble birth and great beauty; at which his holy father confeſſor Dunſtan was ſo much offended, that he enjoined him, by way of penance, not to wear his crown for ſeven years—to build a nunnery,—and to perſecute the married clergy with all his might[32]: a ſtrange way of making atonement for his own libertiniſm, by depriving others of their moſt natural rights and liberties.

Canons of K. Edgar.

As king Edgar was very much under the influence of his three favourite prelates, he paid great attention to eccleſiaſtical affairs, and held ſeveral councils for the regulation of them. In one of theſe councils, thoſe ſixty-ſeven canons, commonly called *the canons of king Edgar*, were enacted; in which there are not many things new, or worthy of a place in hiſtory. By the eleventh of theſe canons, every prieſt is commanded to learn and practiſe ſome mechanic trade, and to teach it to all his apprentices for the prieſthood. By the ſixteenth, the clergy are commanded to be at great pains to bring off their people from the worſhip of trees, ſtones, and fountains, and from many other Heatheniſh rites which are therein enumerated. By this it would appear, that many of the people of England were but very imperfect Chriſtians at this time. The fifty-fourth recommends it to the clergy to be very frequent and earneſt in exhorting the people to pay all their dues to the church

[32] Spel. Concil. t. 1. p. 482.

honeſtly,

honeſtly, and at the proper time;—their plough-alms fifteen nights after Eaſter,—their tithes of young animals at Pentecoſt,—their tithes of corn at All-ſaints—their Peter-pence at Lammas,—and their church-ſcot at Martinmas. To theſe canons is ſubjoined a penitential, which ſome think was compoſed by St. Dunſtan, and requires penitents to be very particular in confeſſing all the ſins which they have committed by their bodies, their ſkin, their fleſh, their bones, their ſinews, their reins, their griſtles, their tongues, their lips, their palates, their teeth, their hair, their marrow, by every thing ſoft or hard, wet or dry. Confeſſors are then directed what kind of penances to preſcribe in a great variety of caſes. The moſt ſatisfactory penances for laymen are ſaid to be theſe:—To deſiſt from carrying arms—to go upon long pilgrimages—never to ſtay two nights in the ſame place—never to cut their hair, or pare their nails, or go into a warm bath, or a ſoft bed—not to eat fleſh, or drink ſtrong liquors—and if they were rich, to build and endow churches. Long faſtings of ſeveral years are preſcribed as the proper penances for many offences; but theſe faſtings were not ſo formidable as they appear at firſt ſight, eſpecially to the rich, as a year's faſting might be redeemed for thirty ſhillings, equal in quantity of ſilver to four pounds ten ſhillings of our money, and in value to more than thirty pounds. A rich man, who had many friends and dependents, might diſpatch a ſeven-years faſt in

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three days, by procuring eight hundred and forty men to fast for him three days on bread and water and vegetables[33]. From this it appears, how much the discipline of the church was relaxed since the council of Cloveshoos, A. D. 747; in which this curious method of fasting by proxy was condemned.

Disputes between the monks and married canons.

The three commissioners for expelling the secular canons out of the cathedrals and larger monasteries, executed that commission with great vigour, and no little success, during the reign of Edgar; but on the death of that prince, A. D. 975, they received a check. The sufferings of the persecuted canons had excited much compassion; and many of the nobility who had been overawed by the power and zeal of Edgar, now espoused their cause, and promoted their restoration. Elfere duke of Mercia drove the monks by force out of all the monasteries in that extensive province, and brought back the canons, with their wives and children; while Elfwin duke of East-Anglia, and Brithnot duke of Essex, raised their troops to protect the monks in these countries[34]. To allay these commotions, several councils were held; in which Dunstan was so hard pushed by the secular canons and their friends, that he was obliged to practise some of his holy stratagems. In a synod held in the old monastery at Winchester, A. D. 977,

33 Spel. Concil. t. 1. p. 443—478.

34 Hoveden. Annal. A. D. 976.

when

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when this great cauſe was about to be determined againſt the monks, and all the canons lately made in their favour reverſed, the aſſembly was ſuddenly alarmed with a loud voice, which ſeemed to proceed from a crucifix built into the partition-wall, crying,—"Don't do that,—don't "do that.—You judged right formerly; don't "change your judgment." On which the aſſembly broke up in confuſion, and nothing was determined [35]. Though the enemies of the monks had been a little ſtartled at this pretended prodigy, they were not convinced; which occaſioned the meeting of another council at Calne in Wiltſhire, A. D. 978; at which the canons and their friends were hurt, as well as frighted. For the room in which the council met being very much crowded, that part of the floor on which the unhappy canons and their advocates ſtood (the chief of whom was one Beornelm, a Scotch biſhop) ſuddenly fell down; which put an end to the debate for that time, ſome being killed, and many wounded [36]. If theſe events really happened, we cannot avoid entertaining very unfavourable ſuſpicions of the celebrated St. Dunſtan, and pitying the weakneſs of the Engliſh nobility in thoſe benighted times.

In the reign of Ethelred the Unready, who ſucceeded his brother Edward the Martyr A. D. 979, the Engliſh were engaged in ſo many wars

Deaths of Dunſtan, Ethelwald, and Oſwald.

35 Spel. Concil. t. 1. p. 490.

36 Id. p. 494. Anglia Sacra, t. 2. p. 113.

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with the Danes, and involved in so many calamities, that they had little leisure to attend to ecclesiastical affairs; which renders the church-history in the end of the tenth and beginning of the eleventh century as barren as that of the state is melancholy. The three famous prelates, Dunstan, Ethelwald, and Oswald, so far outshone their brethren in their zeal for the monastic institutions, that they quite eclipsed all the other bishops their cotemporaries, who are hardly ever mentioned by the monkish writers. Ethelwald bishop of Wincheſter, a great builder of monasteries, and most zealous patron of the monks, was the first of this famous triumvirate who quitted the stage, dying A. D. 984 [37]. By his death, the hopes of the secular canons, of whom he had been a most cruel persecutor, were a little revived, and they made great efforts to get one of their own number elected in his room; but were at length baffled by the superior art and influence of the archbishop, who procured the advancement of Elphigus abbot of Bath to the see of Wincheſter; by pretending, that the apostle St. Andrew had appeared to him, and assured him, that Elphigus was the fittest person in the world for that charge [38]. St. Dunstan did not long survive his friend and fellow-labourer Ethelwald, but died A. D. 988, in the sixty-fourth year of his age, having held the bishop-

37 Godwin de Præsul. Angl. p. 266.

38 Anglia Sacra, t. 2. p. 221.

ric of London, together with the archbiſhopric of Canterbury, about twenty-ſeven years [39]. As this prelate was the great reſtorer and promoter of the monaſtic inſtitutions, the grateful monks, who were almoſt the only hiſtorians of thoſe dark ages, have loaded him with the moſt extravagant praiſes, and repreſented him as the greateſt wonder-worker, and higheſt favourite of heaven, that ever lived. To ſay nothing of his many conflicts with the devil, in which he often belaboured that enemy of mankind moſt ſeverely, the following ſhort ſtory, which is told with great exultation by his biographer Oſbern, will give the Engliſh reader ſome idea of the aſtoniſhing impiety and impudence of thoſe monks, and of the no leſs aſtoniſhing blindneſs and credulity of thoſe unhappy times. "The moſt admirable, "the moſt ineſtimable father Dunſtan (ſays that "author), whoſe perfections exceeded all human "imagination, was admitted to behold the "mother of God and his own mother in eternal "glory: for before his death, he was carried up "into heaven, to be preſent at the nuptials of "his own mother with the eternal King, which "were celebrated by the angels with the moſt "ſweet and joyous ſongs. When the angels "reproached him for his ſilence on this great "occaſion, ſo honourable to his mother, he "excuſed himſelf on account of his being un-"acquainted with thoſe ſweet and heavenly Cent. X.

39 Godwin de Præſul. Angl. p. 75.

"ſtrains;

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" ſtrains; but being a little inſtructed by the " angels, he broke out into this melodious ſong, " O King and Ruler of nations, &c." It is unneceſſary to make any comment on this moſt ſhocking ſtory. St. Dunſtan was ſucceeded in the ſee of Canterbury by Ethelgar biſhop of Seolſey, who lived only one year and three months; and then by Siricius biſhop of Wilton[40], who governed that church about four years[41]. Both theſe prelates had been monks of Glaſtonbury, and diſciples of St. Dunſtan; but the ſhortneſs of their pontificates, and the confuſion of the times, did not permit them to perform any thing memorable. St. Oſwald, the great friend and aſſociate of St. Dunſtan in the expulſion of the ſecular canons, and introduction of the monks, died A. D. 993, after he had held the archbiſhopric of York, together with the biſhopric of Worceſter, about twenty-two years[42]. By theſe two famous ſaints, holding each of them two biſhoprics together for ſo many years, we have ſome reaſon to ſuſpect they were not quite ſo heavenly-minded as their admirers repreſent them.

Fatal effects of the increaſe of monaſteries.

The violent and too ſucceſsful zeal of Dunſtan and his aſſociates, in promoting the building and endowing ſo great a number of houſes for the entertainment of uſeleſs monks and nuns, was very fatal to their country: for by this

[40] Anglia Sacra, p. 2. p. 114.
[41] Godwin de Præſul Angl. p. 75. [42] Id. t. 2. p. 18.

means,

means, a ſpirit of irrational, unmanly ſuperſtition was diffuſed amongſt the people, which debaſed their minds, and diverted them from nobler purſuits: and a very great proportion of the lands of England was put into hands who contributed nothing to its defence; which made it an eaſy prey, firſt to the inſulting Danes, and afterwards to the victorious Normans. Cent. X.

The people of Wales, who were governed by their own princes, were ſtill inſtructed by their own clergy, and ſeem to have had but little connection with the churches of Rome or England in the tenth century. It appears, however, from the laws of Hoel Dha, who flouriſhed about the middle of this century, that the Welſh were not much wiſer, or much leſs ſuperſtitious, than their neighbours in this period; for by theſe laws, which are ſaid to have been made in a great council of the nobility and clergy, at which no fewer than one hundred and forty prelates, i. e. biſhops, abbots, and rectors, were preſent, it is evident that the churches and clergy of Wales enjoyed the ſame diſtinctions and immunities with thoſe of England [43]. The truth is, that there was a very great conformity between the laws of England and Wales at this time, both in civil and eccleſiaſtical matters; which muſt have been occaſioned by the vicinity of theſe countries, the unavoidable intercourſe of their inhabitants, and the aſcendent which the Eccleſiaſtical hiſtory of Wales.

43 Leges Hoeli Dha, a Wottono editæ, paſſim.

kings

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kings of England had acquired over the princes of Wales, who were their vaſſals and tributaries [44].

Eccleſiaſtical hiſtory of Scotland.

The hiſtory of the church of Scotland is as little known in this period as that of Wales. Though the biſhops of St. Andrew's were not yet raiſed to the rank of archbiſhops and metropolitans, they ſeem to have had ſome kind of pre-eminence over the other biſhops of Scotland, occaſioned probably by their greater wealth, and their greater influence with the princes of thoſe times. Kellach the Second, who was biſhop of St. Andrew's from A. D. 904 to A. D. 939, is ſaid to have been the firſt biſhop who went from Scotland to Rome for conſecration, or for obtaining the approbation of the pope [45]. We have good reaſon to preſume, that there were ſeveral councils held in Scotland in the courſe of this century for the regulation of eccleſiaſtical affairs; but the records of all theſe councils have long ago periſhed through the injuries of time, the cruel policy of Edward I. of England, and the ſudden deſtruction of the abbeys of Scotland, with their archives and libraries, at the Reformation. There is a ſlight notice of one of theſe councils preſerved in a very ſhort chronicle, which hath eſcaped all theſe diſaſters. "In the "following year, A. D. 906, king Conſtantine, "the ſon of Ethy, with Kellach his biſhop, and "the Scots, decreed, that the rules of faith and

44 Leges Hoeli Dha, a Wottono editæ, paſſim.

45 Spottiſwood's Church Hiſtory, p. 26.

"of

" of the goſpels, with the laws and diſcipline of Cent. X.
" the church, ſhould be obſerved, in an aſſembly
" held on the Hill of Faith, near the royal city
" of Scone. From that day, that hill hath
" borne the name of *Knockcreidigh*, or, *the Hill*
" *of Faith*[46]." The diſpute about the celibacy of the regular canons of Kuldees, is ſaid to have been agitated in Scotland as well as in England in this century; and there is a circumſtance mentioned by ſeveral monkiſh hiſtorians which renders this very probable. When this great cauſe was to be debated before a council at Calne in Wiltſhire, A. D. 978, the regular canons placed at their head as their chief orator one Beornelm, a Scotch biſhop; a man, ſay theſe authors, of invincible loquacity, who greatly puzzled poor old St. Dunſtan[47]. It is not improbable, that this loquacious gentleman had gained a victory on this ſubject in his own country, which made the Engliſh canons engage him to plead their cauſe.

Ælfric, formerly biſhop of Wilton, was archbiſhop of Canterbury from A. D. 995 to A. D. 1005; and was one of the moſt learned men and moſt voluminous writers of the age in which he lived. This prelate, conſcious of the incapacity of many of the clergy to inſtruct the people in the principles and precepts of religion, tranſlated no fewer than eighty ſermons or homilies from the Cent. XI. Ælfric's homilies.

[46] Innes's Eſſays, v. 2. p. 786. [47] Anglia Sacra, t. 2. p. 112.

Latin

Cent. XI. Latin into the Saxon language for their uſe[48]. Theſe ſermons were ſuited to different ſeaſons and occaſions, and were deſigned to be read by the inferior clergy to the people at theſe ſeaſons for their inſtruction. The ſermon for Eaſter Sunday, on the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, hath been often printed; and ſhews very plainly, that the church of England had not yet embraced the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation[49]. This is ſufficiently evident from the following paſſage in that diſcourſe: "The body that Chriſt ſuffered "in was born of the fleſh of Mary, with blood "and with bone, with ſkin and with ſinews, in "human limbs, with a reaſonable living ſoul: "but his ſpiritual body, which we call the *houſel*, "is gathered of many corns, without blood and "bone, without limb, without ſoul; and there- "fore nothing is to be underſtood therein bodily, "but ſpiritually. Whatever is in the houſel "which giveth life, that is ſpiritual virtue, and "inviſible energy. Chriſt's body that ſuffered "death, and roſe from death, ſhall never die "again, but is eternal and unpaſſible; but "houſel is temporal, not eternal, corruptible, "and dealed into ſundry parts, chewed between "the teeth, and ſent into the belly. This "myſtery is a pledge and a figure; Chriſt's "body is truth itſelf. This pledge we do keep "myſtically until we come to the truth itſelf;

48 Ælfrici præfatio ſecunda ad grammaticam ſuam, p. 2.

49 Hickes diſſertatio epiſtolaris, p. 98.

"and

" and then is this pledge ended [50]." It is hardly possible to express the present sentiments of the church of England, and of other Protestant churches, on this subject, in plainer words than these; and it would certainly be no easy task for the most artful sophister to accommodate them to the doctrine of transubstantiation. Cent. XI.

Ælfric's canons.

This excellent prelate, for so he certainly was for the age in which he lived, composed also a kind of episcopal charge, which seems to have been designed as a form for bishops in instructing their clergy. The several injunctions in this charge are delivered in an authoritative tone, and in the form of commands; for which reason they have been commonly called *Ælfric's canons*, though there is no appearance of their having been enacted by any ecclesiastical synod. These injunctions or canons are thirty-seven in number, and contain many curious particulars concerning the discipline and ceremonies of the church of England in those times. As Ælfric had been educated under Ethelwald bishop of Winchester, he was, like his master, a great promoter of the celibacy of the clergy; and therefore, in the first eight of these canons, he argues strenuously, though not very logically, against the marriage of priests. It appears however, from those very canons, that the clergy of England were generally married at this time, and that they stoutly defended the lawfulness of their marriages. " These

[50] Bed. Hist. Eccl. notis Wheeloci, p. 402.

" canons

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" canons againſt the marriage of prieſts (ſays " Ælfric) ſeem ſtrange to you to hear; for ye " have ſo brought your wretched doings into " faſhion, as if there was no danger in prieſts " living like married men. The prieſts now " reply, That St. Peter was a married man, and " that they cannot live without the company of " a woman." By the ninth of theſe canons, the clergy are forbidden to be preſent at a marriage, or to give their benediction, when either of the parties had been married before, though ſuch marriages are not declared to be abſolutely unlawful, but only to be diſcouraged. The next ſeven canons deſcribe the names and offices of the ſeven orders of the clergy, which are theſe: —1. the oſtiary, who is to open and ſhut the church-doors, and ring the bells;—2. the lector, who is to read God's word in the church;—3. the exorciſt, whoſe office is to drive out evil ſpirits by invocations and adjurations;—4. the acolyth, who holds the tapers at the reading of the goſpels, and celebrating maſs;—5. the ſubdeacon, who is to bring forth the holy veſſels, and attend the deacon at the altar;—6. the deacon, who miniſters to the maſs-prieſt, places the oblation on the altar, reads the goſpel, baptizeth children, and gives the houſel to the people;—7. the maſs-prieſt or preſbyter, who preaches, baptizes, and conſecrates the houſel. This canon declares, that the biſhop is of the ſame order with the preſbyter, but more honourable. By the eighteenth, the diſtinction between the

the ſecular clergy and the monks or regulars is eſtabliſhed. The next canon commands the clergy to ſing the ſeven tide-ſongs at their appointed hours, viz. the ught-ſong, or matins, early in the morning,—the prime-ſong at ſeven o'clock,—the undern-ſong at nine o'clock,—the mid-day ſong at twelve o'clock,—the none-ſong at three o'clock after noon,—and the night-ſong at nine o'clock at night. By the twenty-firſt canon, prieſts are commanded to provide themſelves with all the neceſſary books for performance of divine ſervice, viz. the pſalter, the epiſtle-book, the goſpel-book, the maſs-book, the ſong-book, the hand-book, the kalendar, the paſſional, the penitential, and the reading-book. By the twenty-third, prieſts are commanded to explain the goſpel for the day, every Sunday, in Engliſh, to the people, and to teach them the creed and *Pater noſter* in Engliſh as often as they can. By the twenty-ſeventh, prieſts are forbidden to take money for baptizing children, or performing any other part of their duty. The thirty-ſecond commands prieſts always to have a ſufficient quantity of oil by them which had been conſecrated by the biſhop, for baptizing children and anointing the ſick; but that no ſick perſon ſhould be anointed unleſs he deſired it. The thirty-ſeventh and laſt of theſe canons is in the form of an epiſtle, which was given to each prieſt on Maundy Thurſday, when he came or ſent to the biſhop for his annual ſtock of conſecrated chriſm and oil; and con-

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tains ſeveral directions about the celebration of maſs, and other offices. Among many other ceremonies to be performed on Good-Friday, the people are directed to adore and kiſs the croſs. As the freaks of ſuperſtition are endleſs, ſome prieſts about this time had conceived a notion, that the ſacramental bread conſecrated on Eaſter-day was more efficacious than that which was hallowed at any other time; and therefore they uſed to conſecrate a great quantity on that day, and keep it through the whole year for the uſe of the ſick. This practice is condemned, becauſe when the conſecrated bread was kept ſo long, it was apt to become ſtale, to be loſt, or eaten by mice. Prieſts are directed to mix water with the ſacramental wine; "becauſe the wine "betokeneth our redemption through Chriſt's "blood, and the water betokeneth the people "for whom he ſuffered." A great number of faſt-days are commanded to be obſerved, particularly every Friday, except from Eaſter to Pentecoſt, and from Midwinter to Twelfth-night. Sunday was to be kept from Saturday at noon to Monday morning[51]. Theſe are the moſt remarkable particulars in this famous charge; on which we ſhall leave our readers to make their own reflections.

Death of Ælfric.

Archbiſhop Ælfric expelled the regular canons who would not abandon their wives from his cathedral church of Canterbury, and brought

[51] Spel. Concil. t. 1. p. 572—582. Johnſon's Canons, A. D. 957.

in Benedictine monks in their room. He had also the influence to procure a charter from king Ethelred, confirming that transaction, and all the privileges and possessions of his favourite monks; praying most devoutly, that all persons who should give them any disturbance might be torn by the teeth of all the dogs in hell[52]. This seems to have been the last transaction of this prelate's life; who died A. D. 1005, and was succeeded by Elphegus bishop of Winchester. Cent. XI.

The English at this time were involved in very great calamities, and threatened with total ruin, by a grievous famine, and the sword of the victorious Danes, from whom they sometimes purchased a short precarious truce with great sums of money. In one of these intervals, A. D. 1009, a great council of all the chief men of the clergy and laity was held at Ensham in Oxfordshire, to deliberate on the most effectual means of preserving themselves and their country from that destruction with which they were threatened. Elphegus archbishop of Canterbury, and Wulstan archbishop of York, seem to have convinced this wise assembly, that to oblige the clergy to put away their wives, and the laity to pay all their dues honestly and punctually to the church, would be the best means of averting the displeasure, and conciliating the favour of heaven; and therefore many strict laws were made for these purposes[53]. But either Council of Ensham.

[52] Spel. Concil. t. 1. p. 504.

[53] Id. t. 1. p. 513, &c.

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these laws were not well observed, or had not the desired effect: for the miseries of the English still continued to increase; and about four years after this, the Danes having taken Canterbury, reduced it to ashes, butchered nine tenths of the inhabitants, and murdered the archbishop, because he would not, or could not, pay the prodigious ransom which they demanded [54].

Council of Habham.

Livingus bishop of Wells succeeded Elphegus A. D. 1013, and was deeply involved in the calamities of those unhappy times [55]. Soon after the return of king Ethelred from Normandy (whither he had fled with his family to escape the fury of the victorious Danes), a great council was held A. D. 1014, at a place called *Habham*; in which it was resolved to practise some extraordinary devotions, to prevail upon the saints and angels to fight against the Danes. St. Michael the Archangel had lately gained great reputation by a victory which the Christians in Apulia had obtained by his means, as they imagined, over the Pagans; and the English determined to persuade this celestial warrior, if possible, to do them the like favour. With this view, it was decreed at this council, that every person who was of age should fast three days on bread, water, and raw herbs, before the feast of St. Michael, should confess and go to church barefoot; and that every priest, with his whole congregation, should go these three days

54 Anglia Sacra, t. 2. p. 141. 55 Godwin de Præsul. Ang. p. 77.

in

in ſolemn proceſſion barefoot. The monks and nuns in all their convents were commanded to celebrate the maſs *contra Paganos* (againſt the Pagans) every canonical hour, lying proſtrate on the ground, and in that poſture to ſing the pſalm,—"Lord, how are they increaſed that "trouble me!" &c [56]. The Engliſh at that time ſeem to have repoſed their chief hopes of preſervation in theſe and ſuch obſervations; ſo entirely were their minds blinded and infatuated by ſuperſtition. Their affairs, however, became daily more and more deſperate; and about three years after this council, they were entirely ſubdued by the Danes. Cent. XI.

Though the generality of the Danes at this time were either Pagans, or only a kind of half Chriſtians, their king Canute, who became alſo king of England A. D. 1017, was a zealous Chriſtian, according to the mode of the age in which he lived. Of this he gave ſufficient evidence,—by repairing the monaſteries which had been deſtroyed by the Danes in the late wars,—by granting many immunities to the convents and clergy,—by building and endowing churches [57],—by viſiting Rome in perſon A. D. 1031, and chiefly—by the many eccleſiaſtical laws that were made in his reign [58]. The firſt ſyſtem of Canute's eccleſiaſtical laws contains twenty-ſix canons; of which the firſt four enlarge and ſecure Eccleſiaſtical laws of king Canute.

[56] Johnſon's Canons, A. D. 1014. Spel. Concil. t. 1. p. 530.
[57] W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 11. [58] Id. ibid. p. 533—570.

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the protection of the church, or its rights of sanctuary. In the third of these canons, churches are ranged into four classes, and the mulct for violating their protection proportioned to their dignity, viz. for violating the protection of a cathedral, five pounds; of a middling church, one hundred and twenty shillings; of a lesser church that hath a burying-place, sixty shillings; of a country church without a burying-place, thirty shillings. In the fifth canon, rules are laid down for the trial of priests accused of various crimes, which are very favourable to the clergy. By the sixth, celibacy is recommended to all the clergy, and particularly enjoined to those in priests orders; and for their encouragement it is declared, that an unmarried priest shall be esteemed equal in dignity to a thane. The seventh prohibits marriage within the sixth degree of kindred. In the six subsequent canons, all the dues payable to the clergy, as tithes of corn and cattle, Rome scot, church-scot, plough-alms, light-scot, and soul-scot, are enumerated, and the payment of them secured by various penalties. The remaining canons contain nothing new or curious[59]. There are several laws respecting religion and the church intermixed with the civil laws of this prince; of which the following one is the most remarkable: "We strictly prohibit all Heathenism; i. e. the "worship of idols or Heathen gods, the sun,

59 Johnson's Canons, A. D. 1017. Spel. Concil. t. 1. p. 538.

"moon,

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" moon, fire, rivers, fountains, rocks, or trees " of any kind; the practice of witchcraft, or " committing murder by magic, or firebrands, " or any other infernal tricks."

History of the church in the reigns of Harold, Hardicanute, and Edward the Confessor.

The two succeeding reigns of Harold Harefoot and Hardicanute, from A. D. 1035 to A. D. 1041, were so short and unsettled, that they afford no materials of importance for the history of the church. Though Edward the Confessor was a prince of great piety, according to the mode of the times in which he lived, his court was so much disturbed, during the greatest part of his reign, by the cabals of the English and Norman factions, that he did not pay so much attention to ecclesiastical affairs as might have been expected. There are indeed two systems of laws extant, which are commonly called *the laws of Edward the Confessor*, in which there are several canons in favour of the church and clergy; but they contain in their own bosom the most unquestionable evidence of their having been composed, or at least very much changed, after the conquest[60]. This prince, however, was a great benefactor to the church, and employed the last years of his life in building the famous monastery of St. Peter's, Westminster, on which he bestowed great riches, and many singular privileges and immunities[61].

Character of the eleventh century.

Ignorance and superstition arrived at a great height in the church of England in the former

[60] Johnson's Canons, A.D. 1064, 1065. Spel. Concil. t. 1. p. 619.
[61] Dugdal. Monasticon, vol. 1. p. 55.

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part of the eleventh century. Of this the frequency of pilgrimages to Rome,—the prodigious ſums expended in the purchaſe of relics,—the immenſe wealth and pernicious immunities of the clergy, to mention no others, are ſufficient evidences. In this period, the roads between England and Rome were ſo crowded with pilgrims, that the very tolls which they paid were objects of importance to the princes through whoſe territories they paſſed; and very few Engliſhmen imagined they could get to heaven without paying this compliment to St. Peter, who kept the keys of the celeſtial regions[62]. The pope and Roman clergy carried on a very lucrative traffic in relics, of which they never wanted inexhauſtible ſtores. Kings, princes, and wealthy prelates, purchaſed pieces of the croſs, or whole legs and arms of apoſtles; while others were obliged to be contented with the toes and fingers of inferior ſaints. Agelnoth archbiſhop of Canterbury, when he was at Rome, A. D. 1021, purchaſed from the pope an arm of St. Auguſtin biſhop of Hippo, for one hundred talents, or ſix thouſand pound weight of ſilver, and one talent, or ſixty pound weight of gold[63]. A prodigious ſum! which may enable us to form ſome idea of the unconſcionable knavery of the ſellers, and the aſtoniſhing folly and ſuperſtition of the purchaſers, of thoſe commodities. The building, endowing, and adorning of monaſ-

[62] W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 11.

[63] Id. ibid.

teries,

teries, had been carried on with ſuch mad profuſion for about one hundred and fifty years, that a great part of the wealth of England had been expended on theſe ſtructures, or lay buried in their ornaments and utenſils. "The maſſes "of gold and ſilver (ſays William of Malmſ-"bury), which queen Emma, with a holy pro-"digality, beſtowed upon the monaſteries of "Wincheſter, aſtoniſhed the minds of ſtrangers, "while the ſplendour of the precious ſtones "dazzled their eyes[64]." In this period the numbers, both of the ſecular and regular clergy, increaſed very much, and their poſſeſſions ſtill more. By the frequent and extravagant grants of land beſtowed on cathedrals, monaſteries, and other churches, from the beginning of the tenth to the middle of the eleventh century, we have good reaſon to believe, that at the death of Edward the Confeſſor more than one third of all the lands of England were in the poſſeſſion of the clergy, exempted from all taxes, and for the moſt part even from military ſervices[65]. When we reflect on theſe circumſtances, we cannot be very much ſurpriſed, that the people of England, in this period, were ſo cruelly inſulted by the Danes, and at the end of it ſo eaſily conquered by the Normans.

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64 W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 11.

65 Spelman Gloſſ. p. 396.

THE HISTORY OF GREAT BRITAIN.

BOOK II.

CHAP. III.

The history of the constitution, government, and laws of Great Britain, from the arrival of the Saxons, A. D. 449, *to the landing of William duke of Normandy,* A. D. 1066.

Curiosity and importance of the subject of this chapter.

THE history of that political constitution and form of government, which was established in the best and greatest part of this island, and of the laws which were enacted by the Anglo-Saxons in this period, is equally curious, important, and interesting. It is curious, as it sets before us a great variety of uncommon and amusing objects, and discovers the origin of many of our most ancient customs and institutions. It is important and interesting to the English nation, as that form of government, and those

thoſe laws, were the work of their remote anceſtors; the moſt valuable legacy which they left to their poſterity, and the foundation of that moſt noble and beautiful ſuperſtructure, their preſent free and happy conſtitution.

Difficulty of writing the hiſtory of law and government.

It is much to be lamented, that it is ſo difficult, or rather that it is impoſſible, to write the hiſtory of the origin and progreſs of the Engliſh conſtitution, laws, and government, in ſo clear and full a manner, as to leave nothing dark or wanting; and ſupported in every part with ſuch ſtrength of evidence, as to leave nothing doubtful. That this is really impoſſible, will be moſt readily acknowledged by thoſe who are beſt acquainted with the ſubject. The writers who flouriſhed in this period were very few, and theſe few were cloiſtered monks; who never entertained a thought of giving a particular account of the laws and government of their country. Many of the Anglo-Saxon laws themſelves have been entirely loſt, and others have ſuffered ſo much by the injuries of time, and the inattention of tranſcribers, that their meaning can hardly be diſcovered. Some particulars relating to this ſubject are ſunk ſo deep in the darkneſs of antiquity, and others are ſo involved in clouds of learned duſt that have been raiſed by angry diſputants, that it ſeems to require more than human ſagacity to find out the truth, and guard againſt miſtakes. In theſe circumſtances, all that can be done is,—to cheriſh a cordial love of truth,—to ſearch after it with care and diligence,

diligence,—and to lay the result of these researches before the public with plainness and sincerity.

Plan of this chapter.

To prevent that confusion which is commonly occasioned by blending various subjects together, and to preserve an uniformity between the plan of this chapter and of that on government in the preceding period, it is proper to divide it into three distinct sections. In the first section shall be given,—A brief account,—of the several German nations which settled in Britain in this period;—of the places of their original seats on the continent;—of the situation and limits of their settlements in this island;—of the political divisions of their territories that were made by them,—and by the other British nations. The second section shall contain a delineation,—of the different ranks of people,—of magistrates,—and of courts of law and justice, in Britain, in this period. The third and last section shall comprehend the history of the several kinds of laws that were enacted, and in force, in this period.

SECTION I.

A brief acount,—of the ſeveral German nations which ſettled in Britain, in this period;—of the places of their original ſeats on the continent;—of the ſituation and limits of their ſettlements in this iſland;—of the political diviſions of their territories that were made by them,—and by the other Britiſh nations.

ANCIENT Germany comprehended all that extenſive tract of country which is bounded by the Rhine on the ſouth,—by the German ocean on the weſt,—by the northern ſea on the north,—and by the Viſtula, &c. on the eaſt[1]. This country (which, beſides modern Germany, comprehended all the dominions of Denmark and Sweden, and ſeveral other diſtricts) was anciently inhabited by a prodigious number of diſtinct tribes and nations. But though theſe Germanic nations differed very much from one another,—in their ſituation,—their ſtrength,—their wealth,—and ſome other circumſtances; yet they appear to have ſprung from the ſame origin,—to have ſpoken the ſame language, though in different dialects,—and to have borne a very great reſemblance to each other in their manners, cuſtoms, and forms of government[2].

[1] Cluver. German. Antiq. l. 1. c. 2. p. 76.

[2] Tacit. de Morib. German. paſſim. Northern Antiquities, Preface, p. 24.

This

This was particularly true of thoſe nations which came from Germany, and ſettled in Britain, in this period, and from whom the great body of the Engliſh nation is deſcended. Their original ſeats on the continent were contiguous, ſituated in that peninſula which is commonly called *the Cimbric Cherſoneſe*, bounded by the river Elbe on the ſouth, by the German ocean on the weſt, and by the Baltic ſea on the north and eaſt. When the unhappy Britons formed the fatal reſolution of calling in foreign auxiliaries, to preſerve them from that deſtruction with which they were threatened by the Scots and Picts, they could find none nearer than the inhabitants of that country, who were likely to grant them the protection which they wanted: for their neareſt neighbours, and natural allies, the Gauls, who ſpoke the ſame language, and profeſſed the ſame religion with themſelves, were in no condition to give them any aſſiſtance, having been invaded, and almoſt conquered, by the Franks, another German nation [3].

Original ſeats of the German nations which came into Britain.

The country above deſcribed, to which the Britons directed their eyes for relief in their diſtreſs, was at that time inhabited by three nations, which were called *Saxons*, *Angles*, and *Iutes*; who ſent armies into Britain, and there obtained ſettlements [4]. From theſe three nations the Engliſh in general derive their origin;

Nations from whom the Engliſh are deſcended.

3 Gregor. Turonenſ. l. 1, 2.

4 Bed. Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 1. c. 15. Chronicon Ethelwerdi, l. 1.

though

though ſeveral other nations, particularly Danes and Normans, have ſince mingled with them in very great numbers [5].

The Saxons.

The Saxons had long been the moſt powerful of theſe three nations, and had held the other two in ſome degree of ſubjection. This is the reaſon that thoſe famous rovers who infeſted the narrow ſeas, plundered the coaſts of Gaul and Britain, and gave the Romans ſo much trouble, in the fourth and fifth centuries, were all called Saxons, though they conſiſted of ſeveral nations. The chief ſeat of the people properly called Saxons, was in Holſatia, or Old Saxony, now Holſtein; though, after the departure of the Franks into Gaul, they extended themſelves along the ſea-coaſts to the banks of the Rhine [6]. The Britons having often experienced the valour of theſe Saxons to their coſt, were deſirous of employing it in their defence; and knowing them to be a maritime people, who delighted in ſuch expeditions, they very naturally applied to them for aſſiſtance. They were but too ſucceſsful in their application; ſeveral bands of Saxon adventurers came over and fixed themſelves in Britain, where their poſterity ſtill flouriſh, though under another name, and bear, if we may believe ſeveral travellers, a very remarkable reſemblance in their perſons to the

5 Sheringham de Origine Gentis Anglorum, c. 2. p. 25, &c.
6 Id. ibid.

preſent

preſent inhabitants of Holſtein, from whence their anceſtors came[7].

The Angles are ſaid to have been a tribe of the Suevi, who in Cæſar's time were the greateſt and braveſt of all the German nations[8]. This tribe, after various adventures and migrations, ſettled in that part of the Cimbric Cherſoneſus, which now forms the duchy of Sleſwic, where ſome veſtiges of their name ſtill remain in the diſtrict of Anglen, between Sleſwic and Flenſburgh[9]. It was in this ſituation the Britiſh ambaſſadors found them; and from this country they embarked in the Britiſh expeditions, with greater ſpirit, and in greater numbers, than any of the other German nations; which procured them the honour of giving their name to England and its inhabitants, who make at preſent one of the richeſt, moſt powerful, and flouriſhing nations in the world[10]. The Angles.

The Iutes, who were a tribe of the Getæ, the conquerors of ſo many countries, inhabited the extremity of the Cimbric Cherſoneſus, which from them is ſtill called *Jutland*, and is bounded by the German ocean on the weſt, the Baltic on the eaſt, and the country of the Angles on the ſouth[11]. Beſides theſe three nations, there were many adventurers belonging to the neighbouring tribes, particularly to the Frizians, who embarked The Iutes.

7 Howel's Letters, vol. 1. § 6. let. 4. 8 Cæſar Bel. Gal. l. 4.
9 Cluver. German. Antiq. l. 3. c. 27. p. 605.
10 Bed. Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 1. c. 15. 11 Sheringham, c. 2. p. 32.

with them in their Britannic expeditions, and ſettled in this iſland.

Their ſeats in Britain.

The hiſtory of the ſeveral embarkations of theſe three nations from their native ſeats for this iſland, and of the ſeven kingdoms which they eſtabliſhed in it, hath been already given [12]. It only remains, in this place, to give a very brief deſcription of the moſt common boundaries of theſe ſeveral kingdoms, with an account of the particular nation by which each of them was erected, that all the people of England may have a diſtinct view of their remote anceſtors. In doing this, we ſhall begin at the ſouth-weſt corner of Britain, and proceed regularly towards the north-eaſt.

Kingdom of Weſſex.

The ſouth-weſt parts of Britain were ſubdued by ſeveral ſucceſſive bands of Saxons, who there erected a kingdom about the beginning of the ſixth century; which, from their name, and that of its ſituation, was called the kingdom of *Weſſex*, or of the *Weſt-Saxons*. This kingdom was very ſmall for a conſiderable time after it was founded; but being happy in a long ſucceſſion of great princes of the ſame royal family, it gradually increaſed, and at length ſwallowed up all the other kingdoms. In the times of the heptarchy, it comprehended thoſe countries which now conſtitute the counties of Hants, Berks, Wilts, Somerſet, Dorſet, Devon, and part of Cornwal [13]. The iſle of Wight, which

[12] See chap. 1.

[13] Speed Chron. p. 292.

lies off the coaſt of Hampſhire, was commonly under the government of the kings of Weſſex, though it was peopled by a colony of Iutes, who alſo poſſeſſed ſome diſtricts on the continent oppoſite to that iſland [14]. The capital of this kingdom was Wincheſter, the Venta Belgarum of the Romans, and the Cair Guent of the Britons.

Kingdom of Suſſex.

2. Next to the kingdom of Weſſex lay the little kingdom of Suſſex, or of the South-Saxons, comprehending only the two counties of Surrey and Suſſex. It was, as its name implies, founded and inhabited by Saxons. This kingdom, though one of the moſt ancient, was one of the ſmalleſt, weakeſt, and of the ſhorteſt duration of any of the heptarchy. When it was converted to Chriſtianity, A. D. 678, it contained no more than about ſeven thouſand families [15]. This was partly owing to its ſmall extent; but chiefly to a great part of it being covered with the wood Andereda [16]. The capital of this little kingdom was Chicheſter, the Regnum of the Romans, and the Cair Cei of the Britons.

Kingdom of Kent.

3. Next to Suſſex, eaſtward, lay the kingdom of Kent, which comprehended only the county of that name. This was the moſt ancient of all the Saxon kingdoms in Britain, having been founded about A. D. 455, and was alſo the firſt that embraced the Chriſtian religion. This kingdom, if we may depend on the authority of

[14] Bed. Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 1. c. 15.
[15] Id. l. 4. c. 13.
[16] Camd. Britan. v. 1. p. 195.

Bede and Ethelwerd, was erected and inhabited by a colony of Iutes, who ſeem not to have come directly from Jutland into Britain, but to have been ſettled for ſome time near the mouth of the Rhine, where it is probable the Britiſh ambaſſadors found them [17]; for it is quite improbable, that thoſe ambaſſadors would make their firſt application at the greateſt diſtance; and there is ſome poſitive evidence, that Hengiſt, the founder of this kingdom, built the caſtle of Leyden a little before he embarked on his Britiſh expedition [18]. Though this kingdom was of ſmall extent, it was very populous; and ſeveral of its princes bore a conſiderable ſway in the heptarchy. The city of Canterbury, the Durovernum of the Romans, and the Cair Ceint of the Britons, was the capital of the kingdom of Kent, and one of the moſt conſiderable cities in England in the Saxon times.

Kingdom of Eſſex.

4. To the north-eaſt of Kent, the kingdom of Eſſex, or of the Eaſt and Middle Saxons, was ſituated, comprehending only the counties of Eſſex and Middleſex, and a part of Hertfordſhire. This kingdom, as its name imports, was founded and poſſeſſed by a colony of Saxons; but though it was rich and populous, and had the famous city of London for its capital, it made no diſtinguiſhed figure in the heptarchy, its

17 Bed. Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 1. c. 15. Ethelwerd, l. 1.

18 Camd. Britan. præf. col. 157.

princes being for the moſt part in a ſtate of dependence on thoſe of Kent.

Kingdom of East-Anglia.

5. To the north-eaſt of the kingdom of Eſſex that of the Eaſt-Angles was ſituated, comprehending the counties of Cambridge, Suffolk, Norfolk, and the iſle of Ely. This kingdom was founded and inhabited by Angles, who landed in that part of Britain, becauſe it was not preoccupied by their neighbours the Saxons or Iutes, and lay neareſt to their own country [19]. It was bounded on the eaſt and north by the ocean, on the ſouth by Eſſex, and on the weſt by St. Edmund's ditch, dividing it from Mercia. The capital of Eaſt-Anglia was Dunwich, called by Bede Domnoc, a place of conſiderable note in the Britiſh, Roman, and Saxon times, but now ſwallowed up by the ſea [20].

Kingdom of Mercia.

6. In the very centre of England lay the powerful and extenſive kingdom of Mercia, comprehending (beſides a part of Hertfordſhire) no fewer than ſixteen of our preſent counties, viz. Huntingdon, Rutland, Lincoln, Northampton, Leiceſter, Derby, Nottingham, Oxford, Cheſter, Salop, Gloceſter, Worceſter, Stafford, Warwick, Buckingham, Bedford. This kingdom was erected and poſſeſſed alſo by the Angles, and was therefore ſometimes called the kingdom of the Mediterranean Engliſh [21]. It derived its more common name of Mercia from its ſituation,

[19] Bed. Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 1. c. 15.
[20] Id. l. 2. c. 15. Camd. Britan. v. 1. p. 448.
[21] Bed. Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 3. c. 21.

bordering upon the marches of all the other kingdoms of the heptarchy, as well as of Wales. This ſituation had both its advantages and diſadvantages; for as it gave the kings of Mercia an opportunity of invading all their neighbours, ſo it expoſed them to the danger of being aſſaulted on all ſides. Leiceſter, the Ratæ of the Romans, was the capital of Mercia.

Kingdom of Northumberland.

7. The ſeventh kingdom of the heptarchy was that of Northumberland, ſo called from its ſituation to the north of the Humber. This kingdom was alſo very extenſive, comprehending all that part of England which lies to the north of the Humber and Merſey, and all that part of Scotland which lies to the ſouth of the Forth. The Northumbrian territories were ſometimes divided into the two kingdoms of Deira and Bernicia; of which the former, whoſe capital was York, comprehended the country between the Humber and the Tyne; and the latter, whoſe capital was Bamburgh, the country between the Tyne and the Forth. All theſe countries were inhabited by Angles, though probably with a great mixture of Iutes; for Octa and Ebiſſa, who ſettled a large colony in the deſolated country between the walls of Severus and Antoninus Pius very early, were nearly related to Hengiſt the firſt king of Kent. We may be apt to be ſurpriſed, that the Angles, who were not near ſo numerous or powerful as the Iutes and Saxons, conquered and took poſſeſſion of more than two thirds of England (to which they

gave

gave their name), beſides a conſiderable part of Scotland. But the reaſon of this ſeems to have been, that the Iutes and Saxons only ſent a few bands of adventurers into Britain, the body of theſe nations ſtill continuing at home; while the Angles removed almoſt entirely from the continent into this iſland, leaving their native ſeats deſolate; in which condition, Bedé aſſures us they remained in his time [22].

Subdiviſions of theſe kingdoms.

Such, in general, were the ſituations and limits of the ſeveral kingdoms of the heptarchy, and the Germanic nations by which they were originally erected and inhabited. Though ſome of theſe kingdoms were very ſmall, and none of them, except thoſe of Mercia and Northumberland, of any great extent, yet we have good reaſon to believe, that they were ſubdivided into ſmaller diſtricts, for the more convenient adminiſtration both of the civil and military government. The Anglo-Saxon territories in Germany were ſubdivided into what the Roman hiſtorians call *pagi et vici*; which may not improperly be tranſlated *ſhires and townſhips*, or *hundreds*; and we may be almoſt certain, that they ſubdivided the territories of each ſtate in a ſimilar manner as ſoon as they ſettled in this iſland [23]. Such ſubdiviſions, and their reſpective governors, are frequently mentioned by our hiſtorians long before the end of the heptarchy [24].

[22] Bed. Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 1. c. 15.

[23] Tacit. de Morib. German. ch. 12. Cæſar Bel. Gal. l. 6. Cluver. German. p. 91.

[24] Bed. l. 4. c. 4. l. 5. c. 4. 15. W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 4.

It is not therefore ſtrictly true, that Alfred the Great was the firſt who divided England into ſhires, hundreds, &c. though it is very probable, that great prince made a new and more regular diviſion than that which had ſubſiſted before his time. The reader will find an account of a political diviſion of all that part of England which lies to the ſouth of the Humber, ſpecifying the number of hides, or plough-lands, in each diſtrict, in the work quoted below[25]. This diviſion was evidently very ancient, and ſubſiſted in the time of the heptarchy.

Political diviſions of Wales.

It is quite impoſſible to give an exact delineation of the political diviſions of the territories of the Britiſh or Welſh princes from the eſtabliſhment to the end of the heptarchy. The number of theſe princes who flouriſhed at the ſame time often varied. From Gildas we learn, that there were five Britiſh kings or princes who reigned over ſo many little principalities of the Britons, about the middle of the ſixth century, when he wrote his ſatirical epiſtle againſt theſe princes[26]. Soon after, the number of theſe princes and principalities appear to have been ſix, viz. Guynedh, Powys, Dehewbarth, Reynnuc, Eſylluc, Morgannuc[27]. The truth is, that every thing was fluctuating and unſettled among the unhappy Britons in this period; and the number and limits of their little principalities were per-

25 Scriptores Britan. edit. à Gale, l. 1. p. 748.
26 Epiſt. Gildæ ſub init.
27 Humph-Lhuyd. Fragment. Britan. p. 51.

petually

petually changing, by the fortune of war, and the fatal cuſtom of dividing the territories of a prince at his death among all his ſons. By this cuſtom, the territories of the Britons were ſometimes ſubdivided into an incredible number of little ſtates, which were ſubject to an equal number of petty tyrants, conſtantly at war with each other, and an eaſy prey to their common enemies the Saxons. Without attempting to deſcribe the limits of theſe little temporary ſtates, which were almoſt daily changing, it is ſufficient to obſerve, that the moſt common and laſting diviſion of the Britiſh territories in this period, was into the three following principalities or kingdoms. 1. Dehewbarth, now South Wales, the country of the brave Silures. This principality was anciently divided into the ſix diſtricts of, (1.) Cairdigan, now Cardiganſhire; (2.) Dyvet, now Pembrokeſhire; (3.) Cairmarden, now Carmarthenſhire; (4.) Morganive, now Glamorganſhire; (5.) Guent, now Monmouthſhire; (6.) Brecknock, now Brecknockſhire. The chief reſidence or capital of the ancient princes of South Wales, was Cairmarden, and ſometimes Dinevor caſtle. 2. The principality of Matheaual, or Powyſland, the country of the Demetæ, was divided into the three diſtricts of Powys-Vadoc, Powys between the Wye and Severn, and Powys Wanwynwyn. The chief reſidence of the ancient princes of Powyſland, was firſt at Pengwern, now Shrewſbury, and afterwards at Mothraul. 3. The principality

lity of Gwyneth, now North Wales, the country of the Ordovices, was divided into the four diſtricts of Mon, now Angleſey; Avuon, now Caernarvon; Meryonyth, now Merionethſhire; and y Berwedhwlod, now Denbighſhire and Flintſhire. The chief reſidence of the princes of Gwyneth, or North Wales, was at Aberfrau, in the iſle of Angleſey. Each of theſe diſtricts or provinces in the three principalities of Wales, were ſubdivided into ſo many Cantreves, and theſe again into ſo many Commots; ſo as to make fifty-one Cantreves, and one hundred and fifty-eight Commots, in all Wales [28].

Political diviſions of Scotland.

That part of Great Britain, which hath for many ages been called *Scotland*, was, in the times of the heptarchy, inhabited by four nations, viz. 1. the Angles, or Engliſh, of the kingdom of Bernicia; 2. the Strath-Cluyd Britons; 3. the Scots; 4. the Picts. The limits of the kingdom of Bernicia have been already deſcribed. The country of the Strath-Cluyd Britons, commonly called the kingdom or principality of Cumbria, was a ſcene of greater confuſion, and of more frequent revolutions, than even Wales itſelf in this period. When this principality was in a flouriſhing ſtate, it extended from the river Ribble in Lancaſhire along the weſtern coaſt to the mouth of the Clyde, where its capital, Alcluyd, now Dumbarton, was ſituated. But in the ſixth and ſeventh centuries, this country was

[28] See Speed's Deſcription of Wales.

torn

torn in pieces by many petty tyrants, which expoſed the ſouth parts of it to be ſubdued by the Engliſh kings of Deira and Bernicia, and the north parts by the Scots and Picts [29]. The territories of the Scots, in the beginning of this period, were neither large nor fertile. Their limits are thus deſcribed in two of the moſt ancient chronicles now extant: "Fergus, the ſon "of Erc, reigned over Albany, from Drumal-"bin to the ſea of Ireland and Inchegall [30]." From this deſcription, it ſeems probable, that the Scots, before they ſubdued the Picts, poſſeſſed only that part of Caledonia which lies along the weſt and north ſea from the frith of Clyde to the Orkneys; and that their territories were divided from thoſe of the Picts on the eaſt by thoſe high mountains which run from Loch-lomond to the frith of Taine [31]. The Picts poſſeſſed all the reſt of Scotland beyond the frith of Forth, and had frequent diſputes with the Northumbrian kings about the country between the Forth and Tweed; which, though almoſt wholly inhabited by Anglo-Saxons, was ſometimes under the government of the Picts; who, before the extinction of their monarchy, had even extended their dominion over all the weſt parts of Scotland, which lay between the friths of Clyde and Solway [32].

29 Carte's Hiſt. v. 1. p. 210—213.
30 Innes's Eſſays, Append. N° 1. N° 4.
31 See Dr. Macpherſon's Diſſertations, p. 332, &c.
32 Id. ibid.

Such

Eſtabliſhment of the Engliſh and Scotch monarchies.

Such were the political diviſions of Great Britain from the beginning of the ſixth to the middle of the ninth century. About that time a great change took place in the diſtribution of power in this iſland, by the eſtabliſhment of the Engliſh monarchy in the ſouth on the ruins of the heptarchy, and of the Scotch monarchy in the north, on the ruins of the Pictiſh kingdom. Soon after this great revolution, the two kingdoms of England and Scotland arrived at the ſame limits which they ever after retained (with ſome ſmall and temporary variations), until they were happily united into one empire, in the beginning of the preſent century.

Political diviſion of England by Alfred the Great.

Not long after the eſtabliſhment of the Engliſh monarchy, Alfred the Great made a new and more regular diviſion of his whole kingdom, very different from that which had ſubſiſted under the heptarchy in many reſpects. In order to form this diviſion with greater exactneſs, that wiſe and active prince commanded a ſurvey of all his territories to be taken, and recorded in the book of Wincheſter[33]. From this book, which contained a deſcription of the rivers, mountains, woods, cities, towns, and villages, with an account of the number of plough-lands and inhabitants in each diſtrict, he divided the whole into a certain number of ſhires, nearly, though not exactly, the ſame with our preſent counties. Each ſhire was again divided into trithings or

33 Ingulf. Hiſt.

leths;

leths; of which diviſion there are ſtill ſome veſtiges in the ridings of Yorkſhire, the leths of Kent, and the rapes of Suſſex[34]. Every trithing was ſubdivided into ſo many centuries or hundreds, and each hundred into ten decennaries or diſtricts, containing ten families, or near that number; for in ſuch diſtributions, it was impoſſible to be quite preciſe and accurate. All the members of each decennary were mutual pledges for each other's obedience to the laws, and anſwerable, with ſome equitable reſtrictions, for their diſobedience[35]. Whoever was not a member of ſome decennary, was conſidered as a vagabond, who could claim no protection or benefit from the laws of his country. In each of theſe diviſions of ſhires, trithings, hundreds, and decennaries, that wiſe king appointed certain magiſtrates and courts, which ſhall be hereafter deſcribed. It is impoſſible to conceive any diſtribution more admirably contrived than this, for preſerving peace and good order, and bringing all the members of the ſociety under the immediate eye of the law, as every member of it had nine perſons, beſides himſelf, who were anſwerable for his good behaviour.

State of population in Britain in this period.

Britain was far from being populous in the period we are now conſidering. Of this the moſt ample evidence, as well as the moſt ſatisfactory reaſons, may be given. The Scots and Picts had

34 Spelman Vita Ælfridi, p. 74.

35 Wilkins Leges Saxonicæ, p. 20—204.

almoſt

almoſt quite depopulated a great part of provincial Britain before the arrival of the Saxons [36]. Thoſe dangerous auxiliaries becoming enemies, extirpated, enſlaved, or expelled, all the ancient inhabitants of the beſt part of Britain, in erecting their ſeven kingdoms. After theſe kingdoms were erected, their cruel and inceſſant wars againſt each other prevented their becoming populous. When thoſe ſeven kingdoms were united into one monarchy, new enemies appeared, no leſs deſtructive to population than any of the former, and prevented the happy effects of that union. The fatal rage of building monaſteries, and crowding them with uſeleſs monks and nuns; this rage, I ſay, which ſeized the kings and nobility of England, after the eſtabliſhment of the Engliſh monarchy, contributed not a little to impede the increaſe of people in that period. The very imperfect ſtate of commerce, manufactures, and agriculture, which occaſioned frequent and deſtructive famines, is at once an evidence and a cauſe of a ſcanty population in thoſe times. As a further evidence of this, it may be obſerved, that there were very few cities or towns in Britain in this period, and theſe few were ſmall and thinly peopled. In Scotland, there was not perhaps ſo much as one place that merited the name of a city; and in South Britain, where the Romans had built ſo great a number of towns, we are told by Nennius, there were only twenty-

[36] Gildæ Hiſt. c. 11—26.

eight

eight remaining in the ſeventh century [37]. There is the cleareſt evidence from Doomſday-book, that not one of theſe cities, even at the end of this period (London and Wincheſter perhaps excepted), contained ten thouſand inhabitants; and the greateſt part of them contained only a few hundreds [38]. York, which is the greateſt city mentioned in that famous record, contained only 1418 houſes, of which there were 540 uninhabited [39]. In Exeter there were only 315 houſes, and in Warwick 223. Upon the whole, it ſeems very probable, that Britain was not much more populous in the times of the heptarchy, than it had been in the ancient Britiſh times before the firſt Roman invaſion; not half ſo populous as in the flouriſhing times of the Roman government; and that from the eſtabliſhment of the Engliſh monarchy to the conqueſt, it did not at any time contain above one million and a half of people. So fatal was the fall of the Roman empire to the populouſneſs of its provinces, and ſo ſlowly was that loſs repaired!

37 Nennii Hiſt. Brit. c. 65. See Appendix, N° 11.
38 Brady on Burghs, paſſim. 39 Id. p. 10.

SECTION II.

The history of the different ranks of people,—of magistrates,—and of courts of justice, in Britain, from the arrival of the Saxons, A. D. 449, *to the landing of William duke of Normandy,* A. D. 1066.

Subject of this section.

HAVING, in the preceding section, given a brief delineation of the political divisions of the British territories, in the period we are now considering, into kingdoms, provinces or shires, trithings, hundreds, and decennaries, it is proper to proceed in taking a view—of the several ranks of people by whom these territories were inhabited, with their respective rights and privileges,—the magistrates by whom these different districts or divisions were governed, with their several powers,—and the various courts in which these magistrates presided. In doing this, it seems most natural to begin at the lowest rank of people, magistrates, and courts, and regularly proceed to the higher; as this is the course in which appeals proceed in the administration of justice.

Slaves.

The lowest order of people among the Anglo-Saxons, and the other nations of Britain, in this period, were slaves, who, with their wives and children,

children, were the property of their masters [1]. Besides those who were native slaves, or slaves by birth, others frequently fell into this wretched state, by various means; as, by an ill run at play,—by the fate of war,—or by forfeiting their freedom by their crimes, or even by contracting debts which they were not able to pay [2]. These unhappy people, who were very numerous, formed an article, both of internal and foreign trade; only if the slave was a Christian, he was not to be sold to a Jew or a Pagan; or if he belonged to the same nation with his master, he was not to be sold beyond sea [3]. Slaves, however, were of various kinds among the Anglo-Saxons, employed in various works, and were not all in an equal state of thraldom. Some of them were called *villani*, or *villans*, because they dwelt at the villages belonging to their masters, and performed the servile labours of cultivating their lands, to which they were annexed, and transferred with these lands from one owner to another [4]. Others were domestic slaves, and performed various offices about the houses and families of their masters [5]. Some of these domestic slaves of the king and the nobility were taught the mechanic arts, which they practised for the benefit of their owners; and the greatest

1 Reliquiæ Spelman. p. 250, 251. Leges Wallicæ, p. 206—324.
2 Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 24. Leges Inæ, c. 7.
3 Ibid. Eigbright Excerpt. c. 149, 150.
4 Glossar. Spelman, and Du Cange in voc. Villanus.
5 Leges Wallicæ, p. 453.

number of the mechanics of thoſe times ſeem to have been in a ſtate of ſervitude [6]. Slaves were not ſuppoſed to have any family or relations who ſuſtained any loſs by their death; and therefore when one of them was killed by his maſter, no mulct was paid, becauſe the maſter was ſuppoſed to be the only loſer; when ſlain by another, his price or manbote was paid to his maſter [7]. In a word, ſlaves of the loweſt order were conſidered merely as animals of burden, and parts of their owner's living ſtock. In the laws of Wales, it is expreſsly ſaid, "That a maſter hath the ſame "right to his ſlaves as to his cattle [8]."

Slavery mitigated and diminiſhed.

The horrors of this cruel ſervitude were gradually mitigated; and many of thoſe unhappy wretches were raiſed from this abject ſtate to the privileges of humanity. The introduction of Chriſtianity contributed not a little, both to alleviate the weight of ſervitude, and diminiſh the number of ſlaves. By the canons of the church, which were in thoſe times incorporated with the laws of the land, and of the ſame authority, Chriſtians were commanded to allow their ſlaves certain portions of time to work for their own benefit; by which they acquired property,—the biſhops had authority to regulate the quantity of work to be done by ſlaves,—and to take care that no man uſed his ſlave harſhly, but as a fellow-Chriſtian [9]. The biſhops and clergy re-

[6] Du Cange ad voc. Servi miniſteriales. [7] Leges Wallicæ, p. 324.
[8] Id. p. 206. [9] Spel. Concil. p. 405, &c.

com-

commended the manumiſſion of ſlaves as a moſt charitable and meritorious action; and in order to ſet the example, they procured a law to be made, that all the Engliſh ſlaves of every biſhop ſhould be ſet at liberty at his death; and that every other biſhop and abbot in the kingdom ſhould ſet three ſlaves at liberty [10]. But after all theſe mitigations of the ſeverities of ſlavery, and diminutions of the number of ſlaves, the yoke of ſervitude was ſtill very heavy, and the greateſt part of the labourers, mechanics, and common people, groaned under that yoke at the concluſion of this period [11].

The next claſs or rank of people in Britain, in this period, was compoſed of thoſe who were called *frilazin*; who had been ſlaves, but had either purchaſed, or by ſome other means obtained, their liberty [12]. Though theſe were in reality free men, they were not conſidered as of the ſame rank and dignity with thoſe who had been born free; but were ſtill in a more ignoble and dependent condition, either on their former maſters, or on ſome new patrons. This cuſtom the Anglo-Saxons ſeem to have derived from their anceſtors in Germany, among whom thoſe who had been made free did not differ much in point of dignity or importance in the ſtate, from thoſe who continued in ſervitude [13]. This diſtinction, between thoſe who had been made free, Frilazin.

[10] Spel. Concil. p. 330, 331. [11] Vide Doomſday-book paſſim.
[12] Spel. Gloſſ. in voc. [13] Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 25.

and thoſe who enjoy freedom by deſcent from a long race of freemen, ſtill prevails in many parts of Germany; and particularly in the original ſeats of the Anglo-Saxons [14]. Many of the inhabitants of towns and cities in England, in this period, ſeem to have been of this claſs of men, who were in a kind of middle ſtate between ſlaves and freemen [15].

Ceorls. The third claſs or rank of people in Britain, in the period we are now conſidering, conſiſted of thoſe who were completely free, and deſcended from a long race of freemen. This numerous and reſpectable body of men, who were called *ceorls*, conſtituted a middle claſs, between the labourers and mechanics (who were generally ſlaves, or deſcended from ſlaves), on the one hand, and the nobility on the other. They might go where they pleaſed, and purſue any way of life that was moſt agreeable to their humour; but ſo many of them applied to agriculture, and farming the lands of the nobility, that a ceorl was the moſt common name for a huſbandman or farmer in the Anglo-Saxon times [16]. Theſe ceorls, however, ſeem in general to have been a kind of gentlemen farmers; and if any one of them proſpered ſo well as to acquire the property of five hydes of land, upon which he had a church, a kitchen, a bell-houſe, and great gate, and obtained a ſeat and office in the king's

14 Heinexii Elementa Juris German. t. 6. p. 27.
15 Brady of Burghs. 16 Somner. Dictionar. Saxon.

court,

court, he was eſteemed a nobleman or thane [17]. If a ceorl applied to learning, and attained to prieſt's orders, he was alſo conſidered as a thane; his weregild, or price of his life, was the ſame, and his teſtimony had the ſame weight in a court of juſtice [18]. When he applied to trade, and made three voyages beyond ſea, in a ſhip of his own, and with a cargo belonging to himſelf, he was alſo advanced to the dignity of a thane [19]. But if a ceorl had a greater propenſity to arms than to learning, trade, or agriculture, he then became the ſithcundman, or military retainer, to ſome potent and warlike earl, and was called the *huſcarle* of ſuch an earl [20]. If one of theſe huſcarles acquitted himſelf ſo well as to obtain from his patron, either five hydes of land, or a gilt ſword, helmet, and breaſtplate, as a reward of his valour, he was likewiſe conſidered as a thane [21]. Thus the temple of honour ſtood open to theſe ceorls, whether they applied themſelves to agriculture, commerce, letters, or arms, which were then the only profeſſions eſteemed worthy of a freeman.

Thanes.

All thoſe above the rank of ceorls were thanes or nobles. There were ſeveral degrees of nobility, or of thanes, among the Anglo-Saxons, though it is very difficult to mark the diſtinctions

17 Wilkins Leges Saxonicæ, p. 70.
18 Spel. Concil. p. 405.
19 Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 71.
20 Spelman's Gloſſ. in voc.
21 Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 71.

between these degrees with certainty and precision. The earl's or alderman's thane seems to have been the lowest degree of nobility; and next to him he who had been advanced to that dignity on account of his promotion in the church, or his success in trade or agriculture[22]. The king's thanes seem to have been of three different degrees, according to their different degrees of wealth, or favour at court, as appears from the hereots to be paid to the king at their death. The hereot of a king's thane of the lowest rank was one horse saddled, and the thane's arms;—of the second or middle rank, two horses, one saddled and one unsaddled, two swords, two spears, two shields, and fifty mancusses of gold;—of the first or highest rank, four horses, two saddled and two unsaddled, four swords, four spears, four shields, and one hundred mancusses of gold[23]. This is a sufficient proof, that these three classes of thanes were very different from each other in point of wealth and dignity; though they were all noble, attendants upon, and retainers of the king; the great ornaments of his court in times of peace, and the chief defence of his person in times of war.

The Anglo-Saxon thanes the same with the ancient German Comites.

Nothing can be more obvious than that the Anglo-Saxon thanes, or nobles, were the genuine descendents and representatives of the ancient German companions of their princes, who

22 Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 71. 23 Id. p. 144.

are

are thus deſcribed by Tacitus: "The moſt noble "are not aſhamed to appear among the compa- "nions and attendants of their brave and war- "like princes. Of theſe companions there are "different ranks, according to their different "degrees of favour with the princes whom they "attend; which fires them with ambition to ac- "quire the firſt place in their eſteem. Nor are "princes leſs ambitious to increaſe the number "and valour of their retainers: for to be ſur- "rounded by a numerous band of brave un- "daunted followers, is their glory, their ſtrength, "their ornament in peace, their defence in war. "In the day of battle, the prince ſtrives to ex- "cel his followers in acts of valour, and they "to imitate his example; he fights for victory, "and they for him. From him they receive the "plenteous feaſt, the war-horſe, and bloody "ſpear, as the marks of his approbation, and "the rewards of their attachment[24]." Hengiſt and Horſa, and Cerdic, and all the other Anglo-Saxon chieftains, who founded kingdoms in Britain, were attended by numerous bands of theſe brave companions, thanes, or followers, who contributed greatly to their ſucceſs. When the conqueſts, therefore, were completed by the expulſion, ſubmiſſion, or ſlaughter of the native Britons, the conquerors, with general conſent, beſtowed certain portions of the conquered lands

[24] Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 13, 14.

on theſe valiant companions of their toils and victories. Theſe lands were called *thanelands*, and were granted with that frank and generous ſpirit with which rude unpoliſhed warriors are animated; without any of thoſe painful reſtrictions, and manifold ſervices and preſtations, that were afterwards invented by artful feudaliſts. For the Anglo-Saxon thanes were under no obligations on account of their lands, except the three following, which were indiſpenſably neceſſary to the defence and improvement of their country:—To attend the king with their followers in military expeditions,—to aſſiſt in building and defending the royal caſtles,—and in keeping the bridges and highways in proper repair[25]. To theſe obligations all proprietors of land (even the churchmen for a long time not excepted) were ſubjected; and theſe ſervices were conſidered as due to their country, rather than to the perſons of their kings; and were agreed to by all as being neceſſary to their own preſervation and conveniency. Such were the thanes or nobles of England, and of the lowlands of Scotland, where the Saxon language was ſpoken, in the times we are now conſidering; and ſuch indeed were the nobles in all the kingdoms of Europe that were founded by the northern nations on the ruins of the Roman empire, being all called by names of the ſame

[25] Reliquiæ Spelman. p. 22.

import

import and meaning[26]. Among the Scots and Picts, the genuine deſcendents of the ancient Caledonians, thoſe who bore the greateſt reſemblance to the Anglo-Saxon thanes, were called *tierna*; and among the Welſh, the true poſterity of the ancient Britons, *teyrn*, which ſignify, the great proprietors of land[27].

State of the thanes, and of their lands.

The thanes, who were the only nobility among the Anglo-Saxons, were a very numerous body of men, comprehending all the conſiderable landholders in England, and filling up that ſpace in ſociety between the ceorls or yeomanry on the one hand, and the royal family on the other; which is now occupied both by the nobility and gentry. In times of war, they conſtituted the flower of their armies, and in times of peace they ſwelled the trains of their kings, and added greatly to the ſplendour of their courts, eſpecially at the three great feſtivals of Chriſtmas, Eaſter, and Whitſuntide. From this body all the chief officers, both civil and military, as aldermen, greeves, earls, heretogens, &c. were taken; and to obtain ſome of theſe offices was the great object of their ambition. Before they obtained an office, their lands were their only ſupport, and they lived in

[26] Thegan, or thane, ſignifies a miniſter or honourable retainer, from the verb *thenian*, to miniſter. The Vaſſes, Drudes, Leudes, Antruſtiones, Gaſſendii, and Gardingii of the Lombards, Franks, Goths, and Wiſigoths, were all nobles of the ſame kind and origin with our thanes; and all theſe names ſignify miniſters or retainers. See Squire on the Engliſh Conſtitution, p. 125.

[27] Macpherſon's Diſſertat. p. 179.

greater

greater or leſs affluence, according to the extent of their eſtates. Theſe they divided into two parts; one of which they called their *inlands*, and the other their *outlands*. Their inlands they kept in their own immediate poſſeſſion, and cultivated them by the hands of their ſlaves and villains, in order to raiſe proviſions for their families; their outlands they granted to ceorls or farmers, either for one year, or for a term of years; for which they received a certain ſtipulated proportion of their produce annually. Theſe cuſtoms had long prevailed among their anceſtors in Germany, and were adhered to by their poſterity in England to the concluſion of this period [28].

Princes of the blood.

The princes of the ſeveral royal families among the Anglo-Saxons were conſidered as of a rank ſuperior to the other nobles, and diſtinguiſhed by the title of *Clitones*, or *Illuſtrious* [29]. The eldeſt ſon of the reigning prince, or the preſumptive heir of the crown, was called the *Ætheling*, or the *Moſt Noble*, and was the next perſon in dignity after the king and queen [30]. Among the ancient Britons or Welſh, in the beginning of this period, the preſumptive heir of the crown or principality was called *Gurthddrychjad*, or the *appointed Prince*; but by their frequent intercourſe with, and partial ſubjection to the Engliſh, they gradually adopted many of

28 Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 25. 29 Spelman. Gloſſ. in voc.
30 Id. ibid. in voc.

their

their laws, cuſtoms, and titles of honour; and particularly called their heir-apparent the *Edling*. This prince had many high privileges and conſiderable revenues aſſigned him, to enable him to ſupport his dignity. All the king's officers and ſervants were commanded to obey and ſerve the Edling, whenever he required them, without reward; and he had the free uſe of all the royal houſes, horſes, dogs, hawks, &c. [31]. Among the Scots and Picts, in this period, the preſumptive, or rather the appointed heir, to their reſpective crowns, was called the *Taniſt*, and enjoyed the ſame honours and privileges with the Ætheling of the Engliſh, and the Edling of the Welſh [32].

Such were the ſeveral ranks in ſociety among the Anglo-Saxons, and other nations of Britain, in the period we are now examining, viz. ſlaves, freedmen, ceorls, thanes, and princes of the blood. In this enumeration no notice hath been taken of the fair ſex, becauſe they were always of the ſame rank with their parents before marriage, and with their huſbands after marriage; except female ſlaves, who did not become free by marrying a freeman, but were commonly made free before, in order to render them capable of ſuch a marriage [33]. Ranks of women.

It is now proper to take a view of thoſe who were inveſted with offices among the Anglo- Anglo-Saxon magiſtrates, &c.

31 Leges Wallicæ, l. 1. c. 9. 32 Dr. Macpherſon's Diſſert. 13.
33 Hickeſii Diſſertatio epiſtolaris, p. 13.

Saxons,

Saxons, and other Britiſh nations, in this period, with the powers and emoluments annexed to theſe offices, the courts in which thoſe who held them preſided, and ſuch other circumſtances as are worthy of attention, and can be diſcovered.

Slaves incapable of being magiſtrates.

The loweſt, though they were the moſt numerous, claſs of men among the Anglo-Saxons were abſolutely incapable of any office of power, truſt, or honour; for being ſlaves themſelves, and not their own maſters, they could have no authority over others, even over their own wives and children. The truth is, thoſe unhappy men could not ſo much as call their lives their own; for theſe might have been taken from them by their maſters with perfect impunity, and by any other perſon, for paying their price to their owners[34]. For ſome time after the ſettlement of the Saxons in England, their ſlaves were in the ſame circumſtances with their horſes, oxen, cows, and ſheep, except that it was not faſhionable to kill and eat them. After the introduction of Chriſtianity, the government began to take ſome notice of this miſerable claſs of men, and to make ſome little diſtinctions between them and other animals. By one law, if a maſter gave his ſlave a blow, of which he died within twenty-four hours, he was to pay a ſmall mulct to the king; by another, a maſter was not allowed to pay his fine for being guilty of adul-

34 Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 25.

tery,

tery, in ſlaves, but only in cattle or money; but ſtill they were very far from being capable of any office [35]. Even thoſe ſlaves who obtained their freedom, very ſeldom attained to any office of power or truſt: thinking themſelves ſufficiently happy in being under the protection of government, they hardly ever aſpired to any ſhare in the adminiſtration of it [36].

Heads of families.

Among the ancient Germans, every father of a family was a kind of magiſtrate, and had a great degree of authority over his wife and children, though it doth not ſeem to have extended to the power of life and death, as it did among the Gauls [37]. After the Saxons ſettled in England, the maſters of families ſtill retained very great power; becauſe they were reſponſible to the public for the conduct of all the members of their reſpective families, and obliged to pay the fines for all the crimes which they committed. If a ſtranger ſtaid above three days and nights in any family, the maſter of that family acquired the ſame authority over him, becauſe he became in like manner anſwerable for his conduct [38].

Borſholder.

One of the loweſt magiſtrates among the Anglo-Saxons was called the *borſholder*, or *tithing-man*, whoſe authority extended only over one freeburgh, tithing, or decennary, conſiſting of ten families. Every freeman who wiſhed to

35 Wilkins Leges Sax. p. 29. Johnſon's Canons, A. D. 877.
36 Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 25.
37 Id. c. 19. Cæſar de Bel. Gal. l. 6. c. 19.
38 Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 9.

enjoy

enjoy the protection of the laws, and not to be treated as a vagabond, was under a neceſſity of being admitted a member of the tithing where he and his family reſided; and in order to obtain this admiſſion, it was as neceſſary for him to maintain a good reputation; becauſe all the members of each tithing being mutual pledges and ſureties for each other, and the whole tithing ſureties to the king for the good behaviour of all its members, they were very cautious of admitting any into their ſociety who were of bad or doubtful characters. Each tithing formed a little ſtate or commonwealth within itſelf, and choſe one of its moſt reſpectable members for its head, who was ſometimes called the alderman of ſuch a tithing or freeburgh, on account of his age and experience, but moſt commonly *borſholder*, from the Saxon words *borh*, a ſurety, and *alder*, a head or chief [39]. This magiſtrate had authority to call together the members of his tithing, to preſide in their meetings, and to put their ſentences in execution. The members of each tithing, with their tithing-man or borſholder at their head, conſtituted a court of juſtice, in which all the little controverſies ariſing within the tithing were determined. If any diſpute of great difficulty or importance happened, or if either of the parties was not willing to ſubmit to a ſentence given in the tithing-court, the cauſe was referred, or appealed, to the next ſuperior

39 Spelman. Gloſſ. p. 86.

court,

court, or court of the hundred. At theſe tithing-courts, the arms belonging to the tithing were from time to time produced and inſpected, new members were admitted, and teſtimonials given to ſuch members as had occaſion to remove into the bounds of another tithing. For as the tithing was anſwerable to the public for the good behaviour of all its members, no man could be member of a tithing in which he did not reſide; becauſe he could not be under the immediate inſpection of thoſe who were anſwerable for his conduct. If any member of a tithing committed a crime, and made his eſcape, the tithing to which he belonged was allowed thirty-one days to purſue and apprehend him. If the tithing did not produce the criminal at the end of that period, the head of that tithing, with two of its moſt reſpectable members, together with the heads of the three next tithings, and two members out of each, making in all a body of twelve men, were obliged to make oath before a ſuperior magiſtrate, "That none of the members "of the tithing to which the criminal belonged "had been accomplices in his crime;—that they "had not connived at his eſcape;—and that "they had been at all poſſible pains to appre-"hend and bring him to juſtice." If the tithing could not give this ample evidence of their perfect innocence, they were obliged to pay the mulct preſcribed by the law for the crime committed. The ſeverity of this laſt regulation was afterwards a little mitigated, and the oaths of all

the members of the tithing to which the criminal belonged, to the above effect, were admitted as a ſufficient exculpation, provided they promiſed upon oath, at the ſame time, to preſent him to juſtice as ſoon as they could apprehend him [40].

Great union among the members of a tithing.

As all the members of a tithing were mutual ſureties, ſo they were commonly mutual friends. They were all of the ſame rank; becauſe thanes were not members of any tithing, the family of a thane being conſidered as a tithing within itſelf, and the thane reſponſible to the public for all its members [41]. A tithing was ſometimes called a neighbourſhip, and its members the neighbours, who were ſtrongly attached to each other's intereſt, and frequently united by the ties of blood. The neighbours fought in one band in the day of battle, and often eat at one table in the days of peace. If any quarrel happened at the common table of the neighbourſhip, a ſevere fine was paid by him who was to blame [42]. If one of the neighbours was wronged, all the reſt aſſiſted to procure redreſs; if one ſuſtained a loſs by fire, the death of cattle, or any other accident, all the reſt contributed to repair the loſs; if one of the neighbours became poor, the reſt ſupported him; all the neighbours attended all the funerals, marriages, and feſtivals of the neighbourſhip; and, finally, if one of the neigh-

40 Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 201, 202. 41 Id. p. 202.
42 Id. p. 16.

bours,

bours, or members of a tithing, behaved ill, he was ſolemnly expelled the ſociety; which was one of the greateſt diſgraces and calamities in which a man could be involved[43]: from that moment he ſuſtained a total loſs of character, became an outlaw and vagabond, and was expoſed to a thouſand inſults.

Advantages of this inſtitution.

It doth not ſeem to be poſſible for human prudence to contrive any political arrangement more admirably adapted than this was, for promoting the peace and good order of ſociety. We need not therefore be ſurpriſed to hear of the prodigious effects it is ſaid to have produced, when it was fully eſtabliſhed and ſtrictly executed in the reign of Alfred the Great. "By "theſe means (ſays Ingulphus), ſo profound a "tranquillity, and ſuch perfect ſecurity, were "eſtabliſhed over all the land, that if a tra-"veller left, or loſt, ever ſo great a ſum of "money in the open fields or highways, he was "ſure of finding it next morning, or even a "month after, entire and untouched[44]."

Societies formed in imitation of tithings.

The advantages of this excellent inſtitution were ſo great, that many, both of the nobility and clergy, who were by law exempted from the neceſſity of being members of any tithing, formed voluntary aſſociations among themſelves upon the ſame plan. The learned Dr. Hickes hath publiſhed the rules which the members of ſeveral of theſe voluntary fraternities bound

43 Spelman Vita Ælfridi, p. 73—82. 44 Ingulph. Hiſt.

themſelves to obſerve: from whence it appears, that they were exactly ſimilar to thoſe obſerved by the members of tithings or freeburgs[45]. Each of theſe voluntary aſſociations had a chief or head, inveſted with the ſame powers with a tithing-man or borſholder: moſt of them had alſo common tables, at which the members frequently feaſted together; ſeveral of their fines were paid in honey or malt, which were no doubt deſigned to be made into mead or ale for theſe entertainments; and when a quarrel happened at theſe feaſts, the offending party was obliged to pay the ſame fine that the member of a tithing was obliged to pay for the ſame offence[46]. In a word, there ſeems to have been no other difference between a *ſodalitium*, or fraternity of thanes, biſhops, abbots, and prieſts, and a tithing or freeburg of ceorls and freemen, but this, that the one was voluntary, and the other neceſſary. It even appears, that though the nobility and clergy were not obliged to become members of any tithing, as that would have implied a diſtruſt of their good behaviour, unbecoming their dignity and character; yet they were encouraged to form ſuch voluntary aſſociations among themſelves, for their own ſecurity, and the public good; and ſeveral laws were made reſpecting theſe voluntary aſſociations[47]. Whether the revival of this Anglo-Saxon inſti-

45 Hickeſii Diſſertatio epiſtol. p. 18—22. 46 Id. ibid.
47 Johnſon's Canons, A. D. 725. ſub fin. Spelman Con. p. 407. 495. 448.

tution

tution would be any improvement of the preſent ſyſtem of police, it doth not become a private member of ſociety to determine. It is perhaps too exact and perfect to be practicable, in a populous and extenſive empire.

The hundredary.

The next magiſtrate ſuperior to the tithingman in rank and power, was called the *hundredary*, who preſided over a diſtrict that contained ten tithings, or that diviſion of a ſhire that was called *a hundred*. This magiſtrate was commonly, if not always, a thane or nobleman reſiding within the hundred, and elected by the other members into his office; which was both honourable and lucrative [48]. It belonged to him—to appoint the times and places for the meetings of the hundred-court,—to preſide in that court,—to put its ſentences in execution,—to inſpect the arms belonging to the hundred, &c.; and for the performance of theſe offices, he received one third of all the fines impoſed in his court, with a certain quantity of corn from each member for maintaining his dogs, which deſtroyed wolves, foxes, and other noxious animals. The hundredary was the captain of his hundred in times of war, as well as their civil magiſtrate in times of peace. This office was known among the ancient Germans, and was long retained among the Franks, Lombards, and Wiſigoths, as well as the Anglo-Saxons [49].

[48] Spelman Gloſſ. in voc. p. 301, &c.

[49] Lindenbrog. Gloſſ. voc. Centenarius. Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 6. 12.

The hundred court.

As the hundredary was the next magiſtrate above the tithing-man, ſo the hundred-court was the next above the tithing-court. All the members of the ſeveral tithings within the hundred were members of the hundred-court, and obliged to attend its meetings, under pretty ſevere penalties. This court commonly met once every month; and all the members, in imitation of their German anceſtors, came to it in their arms; from whence it obtained the name of the *wapentac:* for it was a conſtant cuſtom at the beginning of each meeting, for all the members to touch the hundredary's ſpear with theirs, in token of their acknowledging his authority, and being ready to fight under his command[50]. In theſe courts, the archdeacon, and ſometimes the biſhop, preſided with the hundredary, and both civil and eccleſiaſtical affairs were regulated; an inquiry was made into the ſtate of the ſeveral tithings; many petty cauſes came before them, either in the firſt inſtance, between perſons belonging to different tithings, or by appeals from the tithing-courts. The hundred-courts had not authority to condemn any perſon to death or ſlavery; and if any man thought himſelf injured by their deciſions, he might appeal to the trithing, or next ſuperior court[51]. The proceedings in theſe courts were very ſummary, and every

50 Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 203.

51 Du Cange Gloſſ. voc. Centenarii. Spelman's Gloſſ. voc. Hundredarius, Wapentachium.

thing

thing was determined by the votes of all the members, the hundredary having only a right to collect the votes, and pronounce the sentences. In these hundred-courts, sales of land, and other important transactions between the members of the same hundred, were published and confirmed [52].

Government of towns.

The government of towns and cities in this period very much resembled the government of rural hundreds. The chief magistrate in these places was commonly called the *alderman* or *towngrieve*, or if they were sea-ports, the *portgrieve*; and each of these had the same authority in his town, or city, that the hundredary had in his hundred. The chief court in towns and cities was called the *burgemote*, or *folckmote*, at which all the burgesses attended, all the affairs of the community were regulated, and the disputes between one burgess and another determined. Besides the stated monthly meetings of this court, the alderman or portgrieve had authority to call extraordinary ones, upon sudden emergencies, by the sound of the motbell [53].

Trithingman and trithing-court.

The next magistrate above the hundredary was called the *trithingman* or *lathgrieve*, who presided over that division of a county that was called a *trithing*, and in some places a *lath*, which contained three, four, or more hundreds. The trithing-court in which this magistrate pre-

52 Dugdale's Origines juridicales, p. 27.

53 Wilkins Leges Saxonicæ, p. 204.

ſided, was compoſed of the members of the ſeveral hundred-courts within the trithing; and in it were tried appeals from the hundred-courts, and cauſes between members of different hundreds. In this court alſo the ſales of eſtates, laſt wills, and other important tranſactions, were publiſhed and confirmed [54]. But as this link in the chain of courts and magiſtrates was ſooner left out, as unneceſſary, than any of the reſt, and hath left fewer veſtiges behind it, a more minute deſcription of it would be improper.

Alderman or earl.

The next magiſtrate above the trithingman was the alderman, or, as he was called in the Daniſh times, the *earl*, of that diviſion of a kingdom that was called a *ſhire*, or *county*. The alderman, or earl of a ſhire, was a perſon of the higheſt dignity, and greateſt power, among the Anglo-Saxons; and therefore this office was commonly enjoyed by the thanes of the largeſt eſtates and moſt ancient families. Poſſeſſed both of the civil and military government of his ſhire, the alderman was a little king within his own territories, and aſſumed the titles of *ſub-king* and *prince* in ſubſcribing charters and other deeds [55]. When he appeared at the head of the military forces of his ſhire in times of war, he was called a *duke* or *heretogen*, which ſignify a *general* or *commander* of an army; and was indeed a high and potent prince [56]. In the

[54] Wilkins Leges Saxonicæ, p. 204. Hiſt. Elienſ. apud Gale, t. 1. p. 479.

[55] Selden's Tit. Hon. p. 502. [56] Spelman Gloſſ. p. 288.

moſt

moſt ancient times of the Anglo-Saxon government, the aldermen or earls were appointed by the king; but towards the concluſion of this period, theſe great officers ſeem to have been elected by the freeholders of the ſhire, in the ſhiregemot or county-court [57]. To enable them to ſupport their dignity, the earls enjoyed certain lands, which were called the *earls lands*, and had a right to one third of all the fines impoſed within the ſhire, and to ſeveral other perquiſites [58]. The office of earl was ſo far from being hereditary in the moſt ancient period of the Anglo-Saxon government, that it was not ſo much as for life, but only during the good pleaſure of the ſovereign, and their own good behaviour [59]. Towards the concluſion of this period, it appears, that the great earls were moſt commonly, though not always, ſucceeded by their ſons in their earldoms. But this ſeems to have been owing to the increaſing power of the ariſtocracy, and to the prodigious wealth and influence of a few great families, rather than to any formal change in the conſtitution. From the ſame cauſe, it became alſo very common in thoſe times, for one of theſe great thanes to poſſeſs two, three, or more earldoms; which rendered them too powerful for ſubjects, and at length enabled one of them to uſurp the crown [60].

57 Annal. Saxon. p. 49. Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 205.
58 Spel. Gloſſ. p. 141, 142. 59 Id. ibid. 60 Harold.

Shiregerieve.

As the aldermen or earls were always choſen from amongſt the greateſt thanes, who in thoſe times were generally more addicted to arms than to letters, they were but ill qualified for the adminiſtration of juſtice, and performing the civil duties of their offices. Some of theſe great men had alſo offices at court which required their attendance, or were abſent from their ſhires on other accounts; or ſo much engaged in hunting and other rural ſports, that they could not adminiſter juſtice in their own perſons. To remedy theſe inconveniencies, there was an officer in every ſhire, inferior indeed to the earl in dignity, but commonly his ſuperior in learning, and the knowledge of the laws, who was called the *ſhiregerieve*; and in the abſence of the alderman ſupplied his place. When the alderman was preſent, the ſhiregerieve was his aſſeſſor in judgment, and his chief miniſter in the diſcharge of every part of his duty [61]. In the moſt ancient times, the ſhiregerieves were appointed by the king, but (if we can depend on the teſtimony of the pretended laws of Edward the Confeſſor) they were afterwards choſen in the ſhiregemote [62]. All the other nations of Gothic and German origin, who founded kingdoms in different parts of Europe on the ruins of the Roman empire, had officers of the ſame kind with the Anglo-Saxon ſhiregerieves; which is a ſufficient evidence of their great antiquity [63].

[61] Spel. Gloſſ. in voc. Grafio. [62] Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 203.
[63] Gloſſ. apud Lindenbrog. voc. Graphio.

Lawyers by profeſſion.

After the Anglo-Saxon laws were committed to writing, it became neceſſary that ſome perſons ſhould read and ſtudy them with particular attention, in order to underſtand their true intent and meaning. This gave riſe to lawyers by profeſſion, who, in the language of England in thoſe times, were called *ræd-boran* or *lahmen*, and in Latin *rhetores* or *cauſidici*[64]. Theſe were the ſame kind of perſons who were called *ſcabini*, *rachimburgi*, or *ſagibarones*, by the Germans, Longobards, Franks, and other nations of Europe, in the times we are now examining[65]; for all theſe are Teutonic words a little latinized, and of the ſame import with the ræd-boran and lahmen of the Anglo-Saxons; implying a capacity of reading, and a knowledge of the laws.

Aſſeſſors to the aldermen, &c.

Some of theſe lahmen, i. e. law-men, after having undergone an examination as to their knowledge of the law, were appointed aſſeſſors to the aldermen, ſhiregerieves, and hundredaries; and others of them acted as advocates and pleaders at the bar[66]. In the moſt ancient times, when there were but few who could read, or underſtood the laws, three of theſe law-men were thought ſufficient to aſſiſt an alderman or ſhiregerieve in judgment; but as the number of readers increaſed, the number of theſe aſſeſſors

64 Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 125. Hiſt. Elienſ. apud Gale, t. 1. p. 469.

65 Du Cange Gloſſ. in voc. Scabini, Rachimburgi, Sagibarones. Heineccii Opera, t. 6. p. 642.

66 Hickeſii Diſſertat. epiſt. p. 34. Leges Walliciæ, p. 30. 124.

was

was raiſed, firſt to ſeven, and afterwards to twelve[67]. Theſe aſſeſſors, who were in reality judges, took a ſolemn oath, that they would faithfully diſcharge the duties of their office, and not ſuffer any innocent man to be condemned, nor any guilty perſon to be acquitted[68]. Ingulphus ſeems to think, that Alfred the Great was the firſt who inſtituted this order of law-men as aſſeſſors to the ordinary judges; but there is ſufficient evidence, that this inſtitution was more ancient, both in England and in other nations of Europe[69]. Theſe ancient ſages of the law are very plainly deſcribed in the laws of king Ina, who flouriſhed in the end of the ſeventh and beginning of the eighth century. "If any fight "in the houſe of an alderman, or in the houſe of "one of the famous wiſe men, let him make "compenſation with ſixty ſhillings[70]."

Not the ſame with jurors.

Some learned men have been of opinion, that the ræd-boran and lahmen of the Anglo-Saxons, were the ſame with the jurors or jurymen of more modern times, who have acted a very important part in the adminiſtration of juſtice in England for ſeveral ages paſt. But this opinion is evidently liable to very ſtrong objections. It is founded on one law of king Alfred's, and two of king Ethelred's, which merit a moment's con-

67 Du Cange Gloſſ. voc. Sagibarones. Id. voc. Rachimburg. Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 125.

68 Wilkins Leges Sax. p. 117. Leges Wallicæ, p. 30.

69 Ingulf. Hiſt. Croyland in Alfred.

70 Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 16.

ſideration. King Alfred's law may be thus tranſlated: "If a king's thane is accuſed of mur-
" der, let him purge himſelf by twelve king's
" thanes. If an inferior thane is accuſed, let
" him purge himſelf by eleven of his equals, and
" one king's thane[71]." This law ſeems rather to relate to compurgators, which will be hereafter deſcribed, than to jurors. The firſt law of Ethelred is to this purpoſe,—"That there may
" be a court held in every wapontack, let
" twelve of the moſt venerable thanes, with the
" gerieve, ſtand forth and ſwear on the holy
" things put into their hands, that they will not
" condemn any innocent, nor acquit any guilty
" perſon[72]." This law directs the manner of conſtituting the judges in the hundred-courts, which were the preſident and his twelve aſſeſſors, forming a permanent body. The ſecond law of Ethelred is this: "Twelve law-men ſhall ad-
" miniſter juſtice between the Welſh and Engliſh,
" ſix Engliſhmen and ſix Welſhmen[73]." This was rather an article of a treaty than a law, and conſtituted a court to determine controverſies between the ſubjects of different ſtates. In the fifth volume, we ſhall have an opportunity of inveſtigating the origin of juries.

The court in which the alderman or earl of the ſhire, together with the biſhop, the ſhiregerieve, and the law-men their aſſeſſors, preſided, was called the *ſhiregemote*. This was a court of great

The ſhire-gemote.

[71] Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 47. [72] Id. p. 117.
[73] Id. p. 125.

autho-

authority and importance in the Anglo-Saxon times; a kind of little parliament, in which a great variety of buſineſs, civil, military, and eccleſiaſtical, was tranſacted. One great or general ſhiregemot was held in every county in the ſpring, and another in autumn, at a ſtated time and place, where the biſhop of the dioceſe, the alderman of the ſhire, the ſhiregerieve, law-men, magiſtrates, thanes, abbots, with all the clergy and landholders of the county, were obliged to be preſent. The meeting was opened with a diſcourſe by the biſhop, explaining, out of the ſcriptures and eccleſiaſtical canons, their ſeveral duties, as good Chriſtians and members of the church. After this, the alderman, or one of his aſſeſſors, made a diſcourſe on the laws of the land, and the duties of good ſubjects and good citizens. When theſe preliminaries were over, they proceeded to try and determine, firſt, the cauſes of the church, next the pleas of the crown, and laſt of all the controverſies of private parties [74]. As ſoon as a cauſe was opened, and ſufficiently underſtood, and the evidence produced on both ſides, it was determined by the votes of the whole aſſembly, which were collected by the law-men, who drew up and pronounced the ſentence [75]. If any queſtion of law aroſe, it was anſwered by the law-men out of the dome-boc, or law-book, which always lay before them in

74 Reliquiæ Spelman. p. 54.

75 Hickeſii Diſſertatio epiſt. p. 31, 32.

court.

court [76]. Beſides the trial both of criminal and civil cauſes, a variety of other buſineſs was tranſacted at the ſhiregemots; ſuch as the ſale of lands, donations to the church, the publication and confirmation of teſtaments, &c [77].

County-courts.

Though the ſhiregemot ſometimes continued ſeveral days, it was impoſſible to finiſh all its buſineſs in the two annual general meetings; and therefore county-courts were held by the ſhiregerieve from four weeks to four weeks, to determine ſuch cauſes as could not be overtaken by the general ſhiregemots. At theſe leſſer county-courts, which are ſometimes called *folckmotes*, none were obliged to attend but the ſhiregerieves, the law-men, the parties and witneſſes in the cauſes to be tried, and ſuch as had immediate buſineſs [78].

Anglo-Saxon chancellor.

Whether there was any ſtated legal magiſtrate below the king, and ſuperior to the aldermen, or earls of counties, in the Anglo-Saxon times, may be juſtly queſtioned. The name of chancellor was not then indeed unknown; but he ſeems to have had little authority or juriſdiction, and to have acted as a kind of private ſecretary to the king; for which reaſon he is ſometimes called the king's ſcribe or notary [79]. This office, however, giving thoſe who were inveſted with it frequent acceſs to the perſons and ſecrets of their royal maſters, procured them no little influence,

[76] Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 48. [77] Hickeſii Diſſertatio epiſt. p. 30.
[78] Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 50. [79] Ingulf. Hiſt. Croyl.

and

and gradually became more and more important.

Anglo-Saxon cyning or king.

The chief magiſtrate in all the ſtates eſtabliſhed by the Anglo-Saxons in this iſland, was called the *cyning* or *king*; a title of the moſt honourable import in their language, as including the ideas of wiſdom, power, and valour, the moſt neceſſary qualifications of a ſovereign, both in peace and war [80]. It is true, that thoſe chieftains who conducted the ſeveral bands of adventurers out of Germany into Britain, were at their arrival only heretoges; a title which ſignified no more than the leader of an army during an expedition, which conveyed no authority in times of peace, and was commonly of very ſhort duration [81]. But as thoſe armies of adventurers met with a vigorous oppoſition from the native Britons, which continued many years, the authority of their heretoges or leaders laſted long, and by degrees became firm and well eſtabliſhed. This encouraged theſe leaders, with the conſent, and perhaps at the deſire, of their followers, to aſſume the more honourable and permanent title of king; though it is hardly to be imagined, that this new title occaſioned at firſt any very remarkable change in the conſtitution, or brought with it any great acceſſion of authority. It is even probable, that the ſeveral Anglo-Saxon armies beſtowed the title of kings on their reſpective leaders, as much to do honour to themſelves

[80] Somner Diction. Saxon. in voc. [81] Chron. Saxon. p. 13.

as

as to their leaders. While they were commanded only by heretoges, they were conſidered as a collection of adventurers engaged in a piratical or plundering expedition; but when they had kings at their heads, they appeared in the more reſpectable light of regular ſtates or nations. This account of the origin of kingly government among the Anglo-Saxons in this iſland is very much confirmed by what happened in the north of England, and ſouth of Scotland, in the ſame period. Octa and Ebeſſa conducted a very large colony out of Germany into Britain, A. D. 460, with which they ſettled between the walls of Severus and Antoninus Pius, or the rivers Tyne and Forth. This country being at that time almoſt deſolate, they met with little or no oppoſition; and therefore did not beſtow the title of king on any of their leaders, till near a century after, when they came to be involved in long and bloody wars.

Rules of ſucceſſion, &c. in the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.

It would be very improper to ſwell this work by entering deep into the political altercations of modern writers concerning—the rules of ſucceſſion to the crown in the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms,—the duties, prerogatives, and revenues, of the Anglo-Saxon kings. It is more becoming the dignity of hiſtory, to lay before the reader, in a few words, what appears to be the truth on theſe ſubjects, as far as it can be diſcovered from the genuine monuments of thoſe times.

Each

The crown hereditary, but not ſtrictly.

Each of thoſe brave victorious chieftains who founded a ſtate in this iſland by his conqueſts, was highly honoured by his followers during life; and his valour and victories, to which they owed their eſtabliſhment, were remembered with admiration even after his death. This veneration for the father and founder of their ſtate inſpired them, and their poſterity for a conſiderable time, with great reſpect and affection for his deſcendants, who were conſidered by them as inheriting the virtues of their great anceſtor, and on that account intitled to inherit alſo his wealth and honours. Agreeable to this, we may obſerve, that the ſucceſſion to the crown in all the kingdoms of the heptarchy was at the beginning remarkably clear and regular, the eldeſt ſon ſucceeding his father, without interruption, for ſeveral generations. This is a ſufficient indication, that this moſt natural and obvious rule of ſucceſſion was not unknown to our Saxon anceſtors at their firſt eſtabliſhment in this iſland; and even that it was the rule which they propoſed to follow. It was, however, too perfect to be ſtrictly and invariably obſerved in thoſe rude and unſettled times. By degrees it was violated, and greater and greater breaches made in the ſucceſſion. At firſt it was thought no great ſtretch for the brother of the deceaſed prince, who was of a mature age, and warlike character, to ſupplant his infant-nephew; as fierce unpoliſhed nations could hardly form an idea of being governed by a child, or by

by a regent in his name. This is so true, that there is but one example of a minority, and that a short and unfortunate one, in all the history of the heptarchy [82]. When this breach in the succession was become familiar, they proceeded to greater deviations; and sometimes a prince of the royal family, who was at a great distance from the throne, took possession of it, to the exclusion of many who were nearer; but still the veneration of the people for the family of the founder of their state was so great, that no man who was not of that family dared to cast an ambitious eye on the crown. At last, however, this veneration was so much diminished, by length of time, and by the vices, follies, and quarrels, of the several royal families, that the thrones of all the kingdoms of the heptarchy, that of Wessex alone excepted, were seized by bold usurpers, who had no connection with the families of their founders; which first involved these kingdoms in confusion, and at last in ruin. The family of Cerdic, the founder of the West-Saxon kingdom (from whom our present most gracious sovereign George III. is descended), was more fortunate than any of the other royal families. For though the strictest rule of succession was often violated in this illustrious line (sometimes through necessity and for the public good [83]); yet the family was never quite excluded from the

[82] Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 5. c. 24.

[83] W. Malms. l. 1. c. 2. Brompt. p. 770. Chron. Saxon. p. 56.

throne, but was at length exalted to the monarchy of England in the perſon of Egbert, the firſt Engliſh monarch.

Hereditary after the eſtabliſhment of the monarchy.

After the eſtabliſhment of the monarchy, the ſtricteſt rule of ſucceſſion again took place, and was for ſome time obſerved; but in leſs than a century, it was again violated by Alfred, the beſt and greateſt of our ancient kings, who was called to the throne by the urgent neceſſities of the times, and the importunate cries of the whole nation, to the excluſion of the infant-ſon of his elder brother. Several ſimilar breaches were afterwards made in the ſucceſſion, to ſay nothing of the violent intruſion of the Daniſh kings, and the uſurpation of Harold. Upon the whole, there is ſufficient evidence, that the crown of England was conſidered as hereditary from the very beginning by the Anglo-Saxons; though the ſtricteſt rule of hereditary ſucceſſion was ſometimes obliged to yield to neceſſity, and ſometimes to violence. In theſe deviations the teſtament of the laſt king was ſometimes of no little weight; and the approbation of the great men in the wittenagemot was always neceſſary to their ſtability.

Rules of ſucceſſion to the crown among the Scots and Welſh.

The ſame obſervations may be applied to the ſucceſſion of the crown among the Scots in this period; though the deviations from the ſtrict rule of hereditary ſucceſſion ſeem to have been rather more frequent among them than among the Engliſh. Kenneth II. who mounted the throne of Scotland A. D. 970, is ſaid to have made

made a law to prevent these deviations, and to secure the crown to the eldest son of the last king [84]. But if such a law was made, it is evident from the history of the succeeding period, that it had little or no effect. The unhappy custom that prevailed among the Welsh, of dividing the territories of the father among all his sons, threw every thing with regard to the succession of their princes into great confusion, and was attended with many other fatal consequences.

Duties of the Anglo-Saxon kings.

The duties of a sovereign, in the times we are now considering, were chiefly two:—To administer justice to his subjects, with the assistance of his court or council, in times of peace,—and to command the armies of the state in times of war.

To administer justice.

That our Anglo-Saxon kings were considered as the chief judges in their respective kingdoms, and frequently administered justice in person, is undeniable [85]. To this they were bound by their coronation oath; and in this some of them spent a great proportion of their time. Alfred the Great, in particular, as we are assured by Asserius, who lived in his court, sometimes employed both day and night in hearing causes that were brought before him by appeals from the sentences of inferior judges [86]. These sentences he frequently reversed, reprimanding the judges

84 Boet. Hist. Scot. l. 2.
85 Hickesii Dissertatio epistolaris, p. 115.
86 Asser. Vita Ælfridi, p. 21.

for their ignorance, and commanding them, either to apply to the ſtudy of the laws, or reſign their offices[87]. When their wrong judgments proceeded from malice or corruption, he puniſhed them with great ſeverity, and, if we may believe the author quoted below[88], condemned no fewer than forty-two judges in one year to capital puniſhments. To aſſiſt our ancient kings in performing this part of their royal office, they were conſtantly attended by a conſiderable number of the greateſt and wiſeſt men of the kingdom, who acted as aſſeſſors to their ſovereign, and formed a ſupreme court of juſtice, which was called the *king's court* or *council*[89]. To render the attendance of the members of this ſupreme council more eaſy and compatible with the management of their private affairs, Alfred the Great divided them into three equal parts, which ſucceeded each other monthly[90].

This part of the royal office performed by a deputy.

This part of the royal office was found to be very inconvenient after the eſtabliſhment of the monarchy, when appeals to the ſovereign from all parts of England became very frequent, and when few of our kings had ſufficient knowledge and induſtry to perform it in perſon. Several laws were made to prevent unneceſſary appeals to the ſovereign; and a chief juſticiary was appointed to preſide in the king's court, and perform the judicial part of the royal office, when

[87] Aſſer. Vita Ælfridi, p. 21. [88] Mirroir de Juſtices, l. 5.
[89] See Squire's Inquiry into the Engliſh Conſtitution, p. 181.
[90] Aſſer. Vita Ælfridi, p. 19, 20.

the

the king was abſent, or otherwiſe employed [91]. It is impoſſible to diſcover the preciſe time when this high office of chief juſticiary was inſtituted; though it is moſt probable, that it was ſome time in the tenth century, when our kings were ſo conſtantly engaged in war againſt the Danes, that they had no leiſure to attend in perſon the adminiſtration of juſtice. At its firſt inſtitution, the perſons inveſted with it ſeem to have been called by different names, expreſſive of their high dignity and great authority, as half-king, alderman of all England, &c. Æthelſtan, a great and powerful thane in the reign of king Athelſtan, was raiſed to this high office (and was perhaps the firſt who enjoyed it), with the title of *half-king*; becauſe he performed that half of the regal office which conſiſted in the adminiſtration of juſtice. His ſon Aylwin ſucceeded him; but contented himſelf with the more modeſt title of alderman of all England [92]. After the inſtitution of this office, which continued for ſeveral centuries to be the higheſt in the ſtate, our kings gradually withdrew from the bench, and left the adminiſtration of juſtice to their high juſticiaries and other judges.

The other part of the regal office, which conſiſted in commanding the armies of the ſtate in perſon in time of war, was long conſidered as indiſpenſable. It was by being brave and ſuc- Commanded the army in time of war.

91 Wilkins Leges Sax. p. 77. 250. Spelman Gloſſ. in voce Juſticiarius.

92 Selden's Tit. Hon. p. 505. Hiſt. Ramſien. c. 3.

ceſsful generals, that the founders of the ſeveral ſtates of the heptarchy had become kings; and it was long believed to be improper, if not impoſſible, for any one to be a king who was not a warrior. Many who by blood were well entitled to reign, were excluded from the throne, becauſe, on account of their age or ſex, they were eſteemed incapable of performing this moſt eſſential part of the regal office. Some of our ancient kings, however, after they were firmly ſeated on the throne, were diſcovered to be of an unwarlike character, and naturally incapable of commanding armies in perſon; and were therefore permitted to perform this part of the regal office alſo by a ſubſtitute, who was called the *cyning's hold*, or *king's lieutenant*, and had the ſame authority over all the other holds or heretoges of the ſeveral counties, that the high juſticiary had over all the other aldermen [93].

Prerogatives of the Anglo-Saxon kings.

Nothing can be more evident than this important truth,—"That our Anglo-Saxon kings "were not abſolute monarchs; but that their "powers and prerogatives were limited by the "laws and cuſtoms of their country." Our Saxon anceſtors had been governed by limited monarchs in their native ſeats on the continent; and there is not the leaſt appearance or probability, that they relinquiſhed their liberties, and ſubmitted to abſolute government in their new ſettlements in this iſland [94]. It is not to be ima-

93 Squire on the Engliſh Conſtitution, p. 213. n.
94 Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 7.

gined,

gined, that men, whoſe reigning paſſion was the love of liberty, would willingly reſign it; and their new ſovereigns, who had been their fellow-ſoldiers, had certainly no power to compel them to ſuch a reſignation. The power of adminiſtering juſtice to their ſubjects, and of commanding the armies of the ſtate, which have been repreſented above as the moſt important duties of our Anglo-Saxon kings, may be alſo conſidered as their chief prerogatives. Thoſe princes who performed theſe two offices in their own perſons, with great abilities and ſucceſs, had the greateſt influence and authority; while thoſe who wanted either capacity or induſtry for the execution of theſe offices, were much deſpiſed and diſregarded.

Had not power to make laws, or impoſe taxes.

None of our Saxon kings ever ſo much as pretended to the power of making laws, or impoſing taxes, without the advice and conſent of their wittenagemots, or aſſemblies of the great and wiſe men of their reſpective kingdoms. This is evident from the preambles to the ſeveral ſyſtems of Saxon laws which are ſtill extant [95].

Aſſembled the wittenagemots.

It ſeems to have been the prerogative of our Saxon kings to call the wittenagemots, or great councils,—to appoint the times and places of their meeting,—to preſide in them in perſon,—to propoſe the ſubjects of their deliberations,—and to execute their decrees [96].

95 Vide Wilkins Leges Saxon. paſſim.
96 Spel. Gloſſ. in voce Gemotum.

Had not the ſole power of peace and war.

When the kingdom was ſuddenly invaded by a foreign enemy, or its internal peace diſturbed by an inſurrection, the king might by his own authority put himſelf at the head of his troops, to repel the invaders, or ſuppreſs the inſurgents: but when a formal war againſt a neighbouring ſtate was intended, more deliberation was required; and it could not be undertaken without the advice and conſent of the wittenagemot [97]. The Anglo-Saxon kings had conſiderable influence in diſpoſing of the conquered lands, and dividing the ſpoils taken from the enemy; but they were obliged to uſe this influence with juſtice and moderation, and could not keep above a third part of theſe lands and ſpoils to themſelves, without incurring the indignation of their troops [98]. King Harold, by retaining a greater proportion than this of the Daniſh and Norwegian ſpoils, occaſioned ſo great a diſguſt and deſertion in his army, that it proved the chief cauſe of his ruin [99]. The conſent of the wittenagemot was commonly obtained to the concluſion of peace, as well as to the declaration of war; becauſe the proſperity and happineſs of the whole kingdom were as much concerned in the one as in the other.

Had the power of military diſcipline.

Among the ancient Germans, the king had no power to inflict any puniſhment upon his ſoldiers for deſertion, or other offences, this being the

97 Cluver. German. Antiq. p. 308.

98 Squire on the Engliſh Conſtitution, p. 205. Leges Wallicæ, p. 22.

99 W. Malmſ. p. 94. Higden, p. 285.

province

province of their prieſts, who acted by the authority of the god of war, who was ſuppoſed to be preſent in their armies [100]. But after the introduction of Chriſtianity, the exerciſe of military diſcipline became one of the royal prerogatives, as it was never claimed by the Chriſtian clergy [101].

The power of pardoning.

The Anglo-Saxon kings had no power of remitting any mulct or fine impoſed upon any criminal by a court of juſtice, becauſe that would have been depriving another perſon of his right; but they had a power of changing a capital into a pecuniary puniſhment [102].

Could not alienate the crown-lands.

The kings of England, in the period we are now conſidering, were only uſufructuaries of the crown-lands, and could not alienate any of theſe lands, even to the church, without the conſent of the wittenagemot [103].

Nomination of magiſtrates.

It appears to have been one of the royal prerogatives in the times of the heptarchy, and even after the eſtabliſhment of the monarchy, to appoint the aldermen, ſhiregerieves, domeſmen, and other civil and military officers; but this power ſeems to have been afterwards taken from the crown, and veſted in the wittenagemot [104]. But the time and other circumſtances of this change in the conſtitution, are not preſerved in

100 Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 7.

101 Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 23. 102 Id. p. 36. 201.

103 Squire on the Engliſh Conſtitution, p. 219. Spel. Concil. t. 1. p. 340.

104 Chron. Saxon. p. 49. Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 205.

hiſtory;

hiſtory; and it muſt alſo be acknowledged, that the pretended laws of Edward the Confeſſor, which inform us of it, are of very doubtful authority, and can hardly be depended upon.

Eccleſiaſtical authority of the Anglo-Saxon kings.

The veneration for the clergy, after the introduction of Chriſtianity, was ſo very great, that our kings ſeem to have left to them the government of the church, in a great meaſure, and the choice of perſons to eccleſiaſtical offices, for ſome ages. It is expreſsly declared by the laws of Withred king of Kent, A. D. 694, that the archbiſhop of Canterbury had as good a right to nominate biſhops, abbots, abbeſſes, &c. as the king had to nominate the civil and military officers of the kingdom [105]. This law was adopted and confirmed by Ethelbald king of Mercia, A. D. 742, in a great council of the clergy and nobility, and by his ſucceſſor king Offa, A. D. 785; and ſeems to have been obſerved in all the kingdoms of the heptarchy [106]. By degrees, however, our Anglo-Saxon kings found it neceſſary for the peace and good government of the ſtate, to interfere more directly in eccleſiaſtical elections, and to take care that the dignities of the church ſhould be filled by men of peaceable diſpoſitions, and well affected to their perſons and government. They were ſo ſucceſsful in their endeavours to obtain the direction of eccleſiaſtical elections, that they acquired, firſt the

105 Chron. Saxon. p. 49. Spel. Concil. t. 1. p. 190.
106 Spel. Concil. t. 1. p. 230. 292.

right

right of approving, and at length of appointing, all the chief dignitaries of the church [107].

Did not beſtow nominal titles.

As hereditary titles of honour, unconnected with offices, were unknown in the period we are now delineating, our Anglo-Saxon kings could not have the prerogative of granting ſuch titles.

Coining money.

The authority of regulating the public coin of the kingdom ſeems to have been veſted in the wittenagemot; and the privilege of coining was not only granted to the king, but alſo to the archbiſhops, biſhops, and chief towns [108]. It is unneceſſary to be more particular in pointing out the prerogatives of our Anglo-Saxon kings, as it is ſufficiently evident from the above account, that they were circumſcribed within very narrow limits, and were hardly ſufficient to ſupport the dignity of the crown, unleſs when it was worn by a perſon of a warlike character and great abilities.

Revenues of the Anglo-Saxon kings.

The revenues of the Anglo-Saxon kings, eſpecially in the times of the heptarchy, could not be very great, and conſiſted chiefly in the profits ariſing from the crown-lands, and their own patrimonial eſtates. As the Saxons met with a more vigorous reſiſtance in Britain than any of the other northern nations who founded kingdoms on the ruins of the Roman empire in other countries; ſo they treated the native Britons with greater ſeverity. All the other northern con-

107 Spel. Concil. p. 387. Ingulf. Hiſt. Croyl.

108 Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 59.

querors contented themſelves with ſeizing two thirds of the conquered country, which they divided among themſelves, leaving the other third in the poſſeſſion of the ancient inhabitants[109]. But the Saxons ſeized the whole country, reducing all the ancient inhabitants who remained in it to a ſtate of ſlavery, without leaving them even the property of their own perſons. This country, with its wretched inhabitants, thoſe greedy unrelenting conquerors divided among themſelves, allotting to each chieftain an extent of territory, and number of ſlaves, proportioned to his dignity and the number of his followers. As theſe chieftains, and their martial followers, had acquired their title to their reſpective proportions of lands, ſlaves, and ſpoils, by the points of their ſwords; ſo they received them in free and full property, without being ſubjected to any payments to their ſovereigns, or other magiſtrates, or even to any ſervices, except thoſe of fighting in defence of their country, and keeping the highways, bridges, and caſtles, in repair.

Crown-lands.

This made it neceſſary to aſſign a certain proportion of lands, with their ſlaves, cattle, houſes, &c. in every ſtate, for the ſupport of government, and of the dignity of thoſe who were inveſted with it. In the diviſion therefore of the conquered country, the chief commander of each army of adventurers received, in the firſt place,

[109] Lindenbrog. Leg. Antiq. p. 197.

that

that proportion of lands, ſlaves, and ſpoils, that fell to his ſhare as the leader of a particular tribe or family, which he held in free and full property, and might alienate at his pleaſure, as well as any other chieftain. Beſides this, when he was advanced to the throne, he was put in poſſeſſion of thoſe lands, &c. which had been allotted for the ſupport of the royal dignity; but of theſe he was only the uſufructuary, and not the proprietor; they belonged to the crown, and not to the king, who could not alienate them without the conſent of the national aſſembly or wittenagemot. What proportion the crown-lands originally bore to thoſe of the nation in each ſtate, or whether there was any ſuch proportion ſettled or not, we are entirely ignorant; though it is highly probable, on many accounts, that theſe lands were very conſiderable in extent and value. Out of the produce of their crown-lands and family-eſtates, which were cultivated, partly by ſlaves, and partly by ceorls, thoſe ancient monarchs ſupported their families and numerous retainers in rude magnificence and plenty.

Fines and amercements.

As the adminiſtration of juſtice was one of the principal offices and moſt important prerogatives of our Anglo-Saxon kings, ſo it was alſo one of the greateſt ſources of their wealth. By law, a very great proportion (in ſome caſes one half, and in others one third) of all the fines or mulcts impoſed on criminals by the courts

courts of juſtice belonged to the king [110]. This, at a time when almoſt all puniſhments were pecuniary, muſt have amounted to a very conſiderable ſum. We ſhall have occaſion, by and by, to take notice, that our ancient kings derived conſiderable profits both from foreign and domeſtic trade [111].

Danegeld. When the invaſions of the Danes became frequent and formidable, it became a cuſtom ſometimes to bribe them with a ſum of money to deſiſt from their depredations, and leave the country, and at other times to keep a conſiderable body of troops in conſtant pay, to defend the coaſts againſt theſe dangerous enemies. The ordinary revenues of the crown were quite inadequate to the expence of theſe expedients; and therefore it was found neceſſary, with the conſent of the wittenagemot, to impoſe a tax, firſt of one Saxon ſhilling, and afterwards of two or more ſhillings, on every hide of land in the kingdom. As there were two hundred and forty-three thouſand ſix hundred hides of land in England, this tax, at one ſhilling on each hide, raiſed twelve thouſand one hundred and eighty Saxon pounds, equal in quantity of ſilver to about thirty-ſix thouſand five hundred and forty pounds ſterling, and in efficacy to more than three hundred and ſixty thouſand pounds of our money at preſent. This tax ſeems to have been firſt impoſed A. D.

110 Wilkins Leges Saxon. paſſim. 111 Chap. 6.

991,

991, and was called Danegeld, or the Daniſh tax or payment[112]. It was ſoon after raiſed to two, and at laſt to ſeven ſhillings, on every hide of land, and continued to be levied long after the original occaſion of impoſing it had ceaſed. While the invaſions of the Danes were almoſt annual, our kings derived little profit from this tax, which was all expended in bribing or fighting theſe invaders; but after the acceſſion of the Daniſh princes to the throne of England, it became one of the chief branches of the royal revenue. This tax was raiſed ſo high, and collected with ſo much ſeverity, by king Canute, A. D. 1018, that it amounted to the prodigious ſum of ſeventy-one thouſand Saxon pounds, beſides eleven thouſand of the ſame pounds paid by the city of London[113]. It appears, however, from very good authority, that this was too great a ſum for England to pay in one year at that time. "The tribute (ſays an author of "thoſe times, preſerved by Mr. Leland) that "was paid annually by the Engliſh to the Danes, "was at length raiſed to ſeventy-two thouſand "pounds and more, beſides eleven thouſand paid "by the city of London. Thoſe who had mo-"ney to pay their proportion of this grievous tax, "paid it; but thoſe who had not money, irre-"coverably loſt their lands and poſſeſſions. The "church of Peterborough, and ſeveral other "churches, ſuſtained great loſſes on that oc-

[112] Chron. Saxon. p. 126. [113] Id. p. 151.

"caſion."

"caſion [114]." From theſe accounts it is evident, that this tax had been gradually raiſed from one ſhilling to ſeven ſhillings on each hide of land. It was afterwards reduced to four ſhillings on each hide; at which rate it ſeems to have continued till it was finally aboliſhed about ſeventy years after the Norman conqueſt. Houſes in towns were ſubjected to this tax; and a houſe of a certain value paid the ſame with a hide of land [115].

Forfeitures, &c.

Our Anglo-Saxon and Daniſh kings derived conſiderable profits from forfeitures,—from vacant benefices,—from the hereots of their aldermen and thanes, and from ſome other ſources with which we are not particularly acquainted; which enabled them to live with ſufficient ſplendour,—to reward their friends,—to encourage learning,—to relieve the poor,—to build monaſteries, churches, and other edifices, for the benefit and ornament of their country [116].

The wittenagemot.

As the king was the higheſt magiſtrate, ſo the wittenagemot was the higheſt court; in which, with the king at its head, the ſovereignty of the ſtate reſided, in the period we are now examining. In the times of the heptarchy, there were as many wittenagemots as there were kingdoms; which, after the union of theſe kingdoms into one monarchy, were all united into one great aſſembly, or micklemot as it is often called.

114 Leland's Collectanea, v. 1. p. 11.

115 Spelman Gloſſ. in voce Danigeldum. Doomſday-book, apud Gale, t. 1. p. 775.

116 Aſſer. Vita Ælfridi.

In

In this aſſembly, both eccleſiaſtical and political laws were made; taxes for the maintenance of the clergy, and the ſupport of the civil government, were impoſed; queſtions relating to peace and war were debated; civil and criminal cauſes of the greateſt moment were determined; and the moſt important affairs of the kingdom were finally regulated [117]. All the power and wiſdom of the ſtate were preſumed to be collected in the wittenagemot; which was therefore the guide and guardian of the kingdom, and took cogniſance of every thing that affected its ſafety and proſperity; as the general aſſemblies of the ſeveral ſtates had formerly done in Germany [118]. Its powers.

In that country, all the warriors of every little ſtate, together with the prieſts, who were the only perſons of any conſideration, had a right to be preſent in theſe aſſemblies; and as theſe warriors never engaged in agriculture, trade, or manufactures, but ſpent their time in idleneſs, when they were not employed in ſome military expedition, their attendance on theſe aſſemblies was rather an amuſement than an inconveniency. To ſuch an aſſembly of warriors, the Britiſh ambaſſadors made their application for aſſiſtance; and ſuch, we may believe, were the wittenagemots of the ſeveral little Anglo-Saxon ſtates at their firſt eſtabliſhment in this iſland; conſiſting Its members in the moſt ancient times.

[117] Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 11, 12. Tyrrel's Introduction, p. 109, &c.

[118] Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 11.

of all the aldermen, heretoges, prieſts, and warriors of the ſtate. In thoſe times, when they were fighting their way, and their arms were hardly ever out of their hands, they attended the general aſſemblies of their nation in arms, as they had formerly done in Germany, ready to proceed upon any martial enterpriſe that might be reſolved upon: but a change of circumſtances naturally and unavoidably occaſioned a change in the conſtitution of theſe aſſemblies, which probably took place by inſenſible degrees, and without any poſitive law.

In later times.

When the conquered lands were divided amongſt all thoſe brave warriors who had contributed to make the conqueſt, many of them who had been common ſoldiers, and conſequently received but a ſmall proportion of land, retired to their little farms, which they began to cultivate. Theſe veterans, now become huſbandmen, alſo farmed ſome parts of the lands of the thanes or heretoges, under whom they had fought; and by degrees formed a new order of men, unknown in ancient Germany, who were called *ceorls*, which have been already deſcribed [119]. Some have imagined, that all theſe ceorls, who were deſcended from the original conquerors, and continued to be proprietors of land, had a title to be members of the wittenagemot; and there is ſufficient evidence, that they were not excluded from it by any poſitive

[119] See p. 324.

law,

law, but only by their poverty and manner of life, which rendered their attendance highly inconvenient, if not impoſſible [120]: for as ſoon as any of theſe ceorls acquired ſuch an eſtate in land as enabled them to live with eaſe and dignity, and attend the public councils of the nation, they were declared by an expreſs law to be thanes and members of the wittenagemot [121].

Qualification.

The qualification in point of eſtate required by that law, was the property of five hides of land; and all the free-born Engliſh who were poſſeſſed of ſuch an eſtate, with a church, a bell-houſe, and manor-place upon it, were conſidered as nobles, and had a title to be members of the wittenagemot. This qualification, it is imagined, was afterwards found to be too ſmall, and was therefore gradually raiſed higher and higher, until, in the reign of Edward the Confeſſor, it was fixed at no leſs than forty hides of land [122].

Other members.

Beſides all the conſiderable proprietors of land who could afford to attend the public councils of the nation, all the archbiſhops, biſhops, abbots, preſbyters, aldermen, heretoges, ſhiregerieves, and domeſmen or judges, were, by virtue of their offices, and on account of their wiſdom and knowledge of the laws, members of this great

120 Squire on the Engliſh Conſtitution, p. 167, &c.
121 Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 70, 71.
122 Hiſtoria Elienſis, c. 40.

assembly; which, for this reason, was called the *wittenagemot*, or, *assembly of the wise men* [123].

The ceorls, rather interested spectators than members.

Though great efforts have been made to prove, that the ceorls, or small proprietors of land, were represented in the wittenagemots by their tithing-men, or borsholders, and the inhabitants of trading towns by their aldermen or portreeves, it must be confessed, that of this there is not sufficient historical evidence remaining [124]. It is however highly probable, that many ceorls and burgesses, who dwelt at or near the place where a wittenagemot was held, attended it as interested spectators, and intimated their satisfaction with its resolves, by shouts of applause, and other marks of approbation. On some few great occasions, when there was an uncommon concourse of such spectators, their presence and approbation is recorded in such terms as these:—"Omnique populo audiente et videnti (and all the people hearing and looking on), aliorumque fidelium infinita multitudo, qui omnes laudaverunt, (and a prodigious crowd of other people, who all applauded) [125]." As the real constituent members of the Anglo-Saxon wittenagemots were very many, and those who had a kind of right and interest to be spectators of their deli-

123 Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 14. 72. 76. 79. 102, &c. Spelman Gloss. in voce. Hist. Elienf. c. 10.

124 Tyrrel's Introduction, p. 95, &c. Squire on the English Constitution, p. 244, &c.

125 Spelman. Concil. p. 625. 350.

berations

berations were ſtill more numerous, they frequently aſſembled in the open air, in ſome extenſive plain, on the banks of a river, and near a great town, for the benefit of water and proviſions [126].

The king propoſed the matter to be debated.

It was the prerogative of the king to appoint the time and place of the meetings of theſe great aſſemblies, and, with the advice of his council, to prepare and ripen thoſe matters that were to be laid before them for their determination. This negative before debate, which was of great antiquity, being derived from the cuſtoms of the ancient Germans, was attended with the moſt important conſequences, and gave the king and his council a very great influence in the wittenagemots [127]. Such a regulation, however, ſeems to have been neceſſary in ſuch numerous aſſemblies, which were certainly much fitter for determining what was propoſed and explained to them, than for inventing and propoſing.

Stated times of meeting.

In ancient Germany, the general aſſemblies of the ſeveral nations (of which the Anglo-Saxon wittenagemots were the genuine offspring) met at certain ſtated times, moſt commonly in the ſpring, at the full or change of the moon; and theſe times of meeting were well known to all who were obliged to attend them, who accordingly came to them without any particular ſum-

126 For the names of the places where the wittenagemots met, ſee Hody's Hiſtory of Convocations.

127 Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 11.

mons [128]. This cuſtom ſeems to have prevailed among the Anglo-Saxons long after their ſettlement in Britain; and the ſtated times for theſe meetings, as long as they continued Pagans, were no doubt the ſame that had been obſerved by their anceſtors on the continent. But after their converſion to Chriſtianity, the ordinary ſtated meetings of the wittenagemots appear to have been at the three great feſtivals of Chriſtmas, Eaſter, and Whitſuntide, wherever the court happened to be at theſe times. On theſe feſtivals, the Anglo-Saxon kings of England lived in great ſtate, wore their crowns, and were ſurrounded by all the great men of their kingdoms, who were ſumptuouſly entertained by them, and with whom they conſulted about the important affairs of church and ſtate [129].

Extraordinary meetings.

We have good reaſon to believe, that theſe ordinary meetings, on account of their frequency, and other circumſtances, could not be very numerous, and were attended by few beſides thoſe great men who were members of the king's court or council, and were admitted to the royal table; who, we may therefore preſume, acted rather in their miniſterial and judicial, than in their legiſlative capacity, on theſe occaſions. But when any thing was to be done that required the united wiſdom and authority of the whole kingdom, as the making new

[128] Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 11.

[129] Spelman. Concil. p. 347. n. Hody's Hiſt. of Convocations, p. 58.

laws,

laws,—impoſing taxes,—declaring war, &c. an extraordinary, or rather a more ſolemn meeting of the wittenagemot, was called, to which all who had a right to be preſent were ſummoned. The laws of king Edmund indeed are ſaid to have been made in a mickle ſynod, or wittenagemot, held at London A. D. 944, on the holy feaſt of Eaſter; but it appears from the preamble to theſe laws, that this was one of thoſe more ſolemn meetings to which all the members had been ſummoned [130]. The wittenagemots mentioned by our hiſtorians ſeem to have been, for the moſt part, of this more ſolemn kind, called for ſome particular and important purpoſe; which is probably the reaſon that ſeveral years ſometimes elapſe between theſe meetings, though there might be many ſuch meetings in thoſe remote ages, of which we have no records [131].

Privileges of the members.

The members of the wittenagemots enjoyed ſeveral privileges, and ſpecial laws were made for ſecuring the liberty and ſafety of their perſons, in going to, attending at, and returning from thoſe aſſemblies; but ſuch of them as were notorious thieves were not entitled to the benefit of thoſe laws [132]. This exception may appear ſurpriſing; but it was not unneceſſary: for in thoſe times, too many, who by their rank and wealth were entitled to be members of the ſu-

[130] Spelman. Concil. p. 419.

[131] For the dates of the Anglo-Saxon wittenagemots, ſee Hody's Hiſt. of Convocations.

[132] Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 146.

preme council of the nation, were notorious thieves and robbers; and one of the beſt of our Anglo-Saxon kings loſt his life in extruding one of this character from his own table [133].

General obſervation.

From the foregoing brief delineation of this part of the Anglo-Saxon conſtitution, reſpecting their magiſtrates, and courts of law and juſtice, gradually aſcending from the borſholder to the king, and from the court of the decennary to the wittenagemot, it evidently appears to have been a more regular and ſolid fabric than could have been expected from ſuch unſkilful artiſts. But it was the work of many nations, and of many ages, and aroſe, by ſlow degrees, and various means, to that beauty and firmneſs which we cannot but admire. It would not be impoſſible to trace the progreſs of this political edifice from the firſt rude plan that was formed of it in the wilds of Germany and Scandinavia, to its moſt perfect ſtate: but ſuch a laborious inveſtigation could afford entertainment only to thoſe few who need it leaſt. The changes which have been made in it ſince the Norman conqueſt, will appear in their ſeveral periods in our ſubſequent chapters on government.

Conſtitution of Scotland in this period.

As that part of Scotland which lies to the ſouth of the friths of Forth and Clyde, eſpecially on the eaſtern coaſts, belonged to the kingdom of Bernicia for ſeveral ages, and was chiefly inhabited by Saxons, we may be certain,

[133] W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 7.

that

that its government was the ſame with that above deſcribed. When this country was finally conquered by, or rather ceded to the Scots, about a century before the Norman conqueſt, it only changed its ſovereign; but neither changed its government nor its inhabitants[134]. Pleaſed with this valuable acquiſition, the kings of Scotland frequently reſided in the low countries, and by degrees became acquainted with the Saxon language, laws, and manners; which they at laſt adopted, and endeavoured to introduce into other parts of their dominions. Theſe, however, made but little progreſs, in this period we are now conſidering, in the northern provinces of Scotland, inhabited by the poſterity of the ancient Caledonians, who ſtill retained their ancient laws and cuſtoms; which have been deſcribed in the firſt volume of this work. The taniſt, or appointed ſucceſſor to the crown, was next in power and dignity to the king; the toſhock was the chief commander of the army; while the tiernas, or chieftains (by our hiſtorians improperly called *thanes*), of the ſeveral tribes, with the aſſiſtance of their brehons, or inferior judges, adminiſtered juſtice in their ſeveral diſtricts[135]. All important affairs of general concern were determined in aſſemblies compoſed of the great men of the nation. But it is unneceſſary to be more

[134] Innes's Eſſays, vol. 2. Append.

[135] Dr. Macpherſon's Diſſertations, Diſſert. 13.

particular

particular in describing the ancient constitution of Scotland, before the introduction of the feudal form of government in the reign of Malcolm III. as hardly any authentic memoirs or undoubted vestiges of that constitution are now remaining[136]. It was probably the same with that which was established among the other genuine descendants of the ancient Britons in Ireland and Wales.

Of Wales. That deplorable anarchy in which the provincial Britons were involved after the departure of the Romans, made them an easy prey to the Scots and Picts, and prevented their making an effectual opposition to the Saxons[137]. Even after they had lost the best part of their country, and were confined to the mountains of Wales and Cornwall, their government continued for some time very fluctuating and irregular. This is acknowledged by one of their best antiquaries; who observes, that in the end of the eighth century, "there was as yet no stayed government "established in Wales; but such as were chief "lords in any country were called kings[138]." Their animosity against the Saxons was for some ages so violent, that they would comply with none of their customs, either in civil or religious matters. But when this animosity began to wear off, the great imperfection of their own form of government made them so ready to adopt the

136 See Lord Kames's British Antiquities, essay 1.

137 Gildæ Hist. c. 19. 138 Powel's Hist. Wales, p. 20.

political regulations of their ancient enemies, that before the middle of the tenth century, the conſtitution, magiſtrates, and courts of Wales, were almoſt exactly the ſame with thoſe of England [139]. This is ſo true, that a more minute and particular account of the Anglo-Saxon conſtitution might be extracted from the Welſh laws of Howel Dha, which were collected A. D. 842, than even from the Saxon laws themſelves.

Great officers of the court.

It will at once be a ſufficient proof of this, and a proper concluſion of this ſection, to give a brief account (chiefly taken from theſe laws) of the great officers of the court and houſehold of the kings of Wales, which were the ſame with thoſe of the kings of England, and of all the other ſovereigns of Europe in this period, as to the duties of their reſpective offices, though their emoluments were not ſo great as in more wealthy ſtates.

The great officers in the court of the kings of Wales were twenty-four in number; of which ſixteen belonged to the king, and eight to the queen [140]. Their rank, duties, privileges, and emoluments, were as follows:

Mayor of the palace.

1. The *penteulu*, or mayor of the palace, was the higheſt officer in the court of the kings of Wales, and was always a prince of the royal family. He took place of all the other officers of the houſehold, and had the chief direction of

139 Vide Præfat. ad leges Howeli Dha.

140 Leges Wallicæ, p. 8.

every

every thing within the verge of the court. On the three great feſtivals, he had a ſumptuous table in the lower part of the hall where the king dined; and when any perſon had behaved improperly at the royal table in the upper part of the hall, and was extruded from thence, it was the duty of the mayor of the palace to invite the offender to his table, and to intercede with the king in his favour. A ſtrange mixture of rudeneſs and humanity! This great officer was general of the army, and appointed thoſe parties of the king's forces that were ſent out from time to time to plunder the Engliſh borders, and ſometimes commanded them in perſon. His ſalary was no more than three pounds a year; but he had a great variety of valuable perquiſites, beſides ſeveral honourable privileges; one of which was, that in the abſence of the king all the officers of the court were obliged to attend him, as if he had been the king, and the court-muſician to ſing as many ſongs to him as he deſired [141].

The prieſt of the houſehold.

2. The *prieſt of the houſehold* was the next in dignity, and always ſat at the royal table, to bleſs the meat, and chant the Lord's prayer. His perquiſites were ſo many, that it was certainly one of the moſt lucrative offices in the court [142].

Steward.

3. The *diſdain* or ſteward of the houſehold was the third in rank. It was the duty of this officer

[141] Leges Wallicæ, p. 15—18. Muratori.
[142] Leges Wall. p. 18, 19.

to

to procure all kinds of provisions for the king's kitchen, and liquors for his cellar, and to command all the servants belonging to both,—to assign every one of the guests his proper place at the royal table,—to set one dish upon it at the head, and another at the foot,—and to taste all the liquors before they were presented. The emoluments of this office (besides an estate in land, free from all taxes, annexed to it, as to each of the other offices) consisted in a variety of perquisites, of which the following was one of the most remarkable. "As much of every "cask of plain ale shall belong to the steward of "the household as he can reach with his middle "finger dipped into it, and as much of every "cask of ale with spiceries as he can reach with "the second joint of his middle finger, and as "much of every cask of mead as he can reach "with the first joint of the same finger[143]."

Master of the hawks.

4. The *penhebogydd*, or master of the hawks, was the fourth officer in rank and dignity, and sat in the fourth place from the king at the royal table; but was permitted to drink no more than three times, that he might not be intoxicated, and neglect his birds. He had the care and management of all the king's hawks, and the direction of all the people employed in the royal sport of hawking. When he had been at any time remarkably successful in his sport, the king was obliged, by law and custom, to pay him the

[143] Leges Wall. p. 20—23.

most

moſt diſtinguiſhing honours, to riſe up to receive him when he entered the hall, and even, on ſome occaſions, to hold his ſtirrup when he alighted from his horſe. The emoluments of this office were not inconſiderable [144].

Judge of the houſehold.

5. The *judge of the houſehold* poſſeſſed the fifth place of rank and dignity, and had a ſeat at the royal table. The moſt indiſpenſable qualifications of this great officer were theſe two, a learned education, and a long beard. He was ſworn into his office with very great ſolemnity, and inveſted with it, by the king's giving him a cheſs-board of curious workmanſhip, the queen preſenting him with one gold ring, and the poet of the court with another; all which he was obliged to keep with great care as long as he lived. The judge of the houſehold determined all diſputes that aroſe among the officers and ſervants of the king's houſehold, tried the qualifications of thoſe who were candidates for being judges in the country, and preſided in thoſe famous conteſts of the poets and muſicians that were frequently held before the king; for all which he was entitled to a variety of perquiſites; which made his office as lucrative as it was honourable [145].

Maſter of the horſe.

6. The *penguaſdrawd*, or maſter of the horſe, was the ſixth officer in rank, and the laſt who had a place at the royal table. He had the ſuperintendency of the king's ſtables and horſes, and of all the officers and ſervants employed

144 Leges Wall. p. 20—23.

145 Id. p. 26—31.

about

about them; for which he had many perquisites [146]. This officer seems to have been the same with the stal-here, or master of the stables, of our Anglo-Saxon kings [147].

7. The *givas yſdafell*, or chamberlain, was the seventh officer in rank: and though he had no place assigned him in the great hall, he had the honour to sleep in the king's chamber, of which he had the care. This officer had the command of all the servants employed about the chambers of the king, queen, and royal family. It was his duty to provide clean straw, or rushes, for the beds, to see them properly made, and fires put on, &c. He was also treasurer of the chamber, and had the keeping of the king's cups, drinking-horns, rings, and other valuable effects, for which he was accountable. Chamberlain.

8. The bard or chief musician of the court was the eighth in dignity, and had a seat next to the mayor of the palace, at his table, in the lower part of the hall. When he was invested with his office, the king presented him with a harp, and the queen with a gold ring; both which he was obliged to keep as long as he lived. It was his duty to sing and play before the king, 1. the praises of God, 2. the praises of the king, and, 3. a song on some other subject. He was also to sing and play before the queen, in her own apartment, as often as she required him; but in a low tone, that he might Chief musician.

[146] Leges Wall. p. 31. [147] Cam. Britan. p. 261.

not

not disturb the king and his company in the hall. He likewise attended the army, and before an engagement sung and played a particular song, called *Unbennusacht Prydain*, i. e. the British empire; for which he was rewarded with a share of the booty [148].

Silentiary. 9. The *gosdegwr*, or silentiary, possessed the ninth place. It was the duty of this officer to command silence in the hall when the king sat down to table; after which he took his stand near one of the great pillars; and when any improper noise arose, he immediately quashed it, by striking the pillar with his rod. This useful officer was not peculiar to the court of Wales, and doth not seem to be quite unnecessary in some great assemblies even in modern times [149].

Master of the huntsmen. 10. The *peneynyd*, or master of the huntsmen, was the tenth in rank, and commanded the king's huntsmen, hounds, and dogs of all kinds. From Christmas to the 1st of February, he was obliged to attend the court; but at other times his attendance was dispensed with, as he was engaged in the pursuit of his game. It was one of the privileges of this officer, that when he appeared in a court of justice, he was not obliged to take the usual oaths, but only to swear by his horn, and by his dogs [150].

The mead-maker. 11. The mead-maker was the eleventh, and had, as his name implies, the direction of mak-

[148] Leges Wallicæ, p. 35—37.
[149] Id. p. 38. Du Cange Gloss. in voce Silentiarius.
[150] Leges Wallicæ, p. 39.

ing

ing all the mead that was uſed in the king's houſehold [151].

12. The phyſician of the houſehold was the twelfth, and had a ſeat at the table of the mayor of the palace, in the lower part of the hall. He was obliged by his office to cure all the ſlight wounds of the king's officers and ſervants, without any other fee, but ſuch of their garments as were ſtained with blood, or cut with a weapon; but in more dangerous caſes, as fractured ſkulls, or broken legs or arms, he was intitled to a fee of 180 pence, beſides the bloody garments [152]. The phyſician.

13. The *trulljad*, or butler, was the thirteenth, and had the cuſtody of the king's cellars, and the care of giving out the liquors to all the members of the houſehold, according to certain fixed proportions [153]. Butler.

14. The porter was the fourteenth, and was obliged to know the faces of all men who had a right to be admitted into the king's hall; and was ſeverely fined, if he refuſed any of them admittance. He acted alſo as a gentleman-uſher to the king. Among other perquiſites, the porter was intitled to three horns-full of a certain liquor, which was called *the twelve apoſtles*, at each of the three great feſtivals [154]. Porter.

15. The maſter-cook was the fifteenth, and had the direction of the kitchen, and of the ſervants employed in it. This officer was obliged Maſter-cook.

151 Leges Wallicæ, p. 43.
152 Id. p. 44, 45.
153 Id. p. 45, 46.
154 Id. p. 47, 48.

to superintend the dressing of all the dishes designed for the royal table, to taste them before they were served up, and to serve up the last with his own hand [155].

Master of the lights.

16. The master of the lights was the sixteenth; who had the care of all the wax and tallow candles used in the palace, was obliged to hold a taper in his hand near the dish out of which the king eat, and to carry one before him when he went into his bed-chamber [156].

Officers of the queen's household.

The eight officers of the queen's household were, the steward, the priest, the master of the horse, the chamberlain, the lady of the bed-chamber, the porter, the cook, and the master of the lights, whose duties need not be explained.

Fees and immunities of these officers.

To each of these twenty-four offices a certain estate in land was annexed, free from all taxes, in proportion to the dignity and importance of the office; and each of the officers who filled them had a horse maintained for him in the king's stables, a lodging assigned him in the palace; and those of them who had not a seat at the royal table, or at the table of the master of the palace, had either separate tables for themselves, or an allowance in money. The whole household was new-clothed at each of the three great festivals, by the king and queen, the king furnishing the woollen cloth, and the queen the linen. The lives of the officers of the household were valued at a

155 Leges Wallicæ, p. 49. 156 Id. p. 50.

much

much higher rate than thoſe of others of the ſame rank;—any injury done to them was very ſeverely puniſhed;—and their daughters were conſidered as good matches, and bore a high price. Theſe advantages, and a great variety of perquiſites, immunities, and diſtinctions, made thoſe offices in the courts of our Anglo-Saxon and Welſh kings very deſirable, and objects of great ambition,

The king's feet-bearer.

Beſides the twenty-four offices above deſcribed, there were eleven others, of conſiderable value, in the courts of theſe ancient princes; the moſt remarkable of which was that of the king's feet-bearer. This was a young gentleman, whoſe duty it was to ſit on the floor, with his back towards the fire, and hold the king's feet in his boſom all the time he ſat at table, to keep them warm and comfortable [157]: a piece of ſtate and luxury unknown in modern times! It is unneceſſary, and would be tedious, to give a particular account of the other ten inferior offices.

[157] Leges Wallicæ, p. 58.

SECTION III.

The history of law in Great Britain, from the arrival of the Saxons, A. D. 449, *to the landing of William duke of Normandy,* A. D. 1066.

Importance and utility of the history of law.

THE history of law, though it hath been much neglected, is certainly one of the most curious, useful, and interesting parts of history [1]. To know the most important laws of any nation, in any period, together with the circumstances in which these laws were made, would enable us to form a sound judgment of the state and character of that nation, and of the wisdom, justice, and propriety of its laws. The want of this historical knowledge is apt to make us entertain very mistaken notions both of nations and of their laws. What, for example, can appear more absurd and barbarous than the following law of Ethelbert, the first Christian king of Kent? "If "a freeman lie with a freeman's wife, let him "buy another wife for the injured party [2]." But when we learn from history, that a certain price was, in those times, set upon every woman according to her rank, and that no man could procure a wife without paying her legal price to her parents or guardians, we see that this law

1 See Preface to Lord Kames's Law-tracts.

2 Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 4.

was perfectly just, and implied no more but that the adulterer should pay, by way of damages, to the injured party, the price which he had paid for his wife, who was now lost to him, to enable him to purchase another wife of the same rank.

Origin of written laws among the Anglo-Saxons, &c.

Our Anglo-Saxon ancestors, at their arrival in Britain, had no written laws, but were governed, as their ancestors had been for many ages, by certain well-known and established customs, which had the force of laws [3]. This was the case with all the northern nations who invaded and subdued the several provinces of the Roman empire; they had no written laws when they left their native seats, but were governed by customs exactly similar to those of the Anglo-Saxons. All these nations, after they had formed establishments in Gaul, Spain, Italy, and Britain, became acquainted with letters, and put their ancient customs into writing, which were their first written laws [4]. This is the true reason of the great similarity of the ancient laws of the Franks, Burgundians, Lombards, Wisigoths, and Anglo-Saxons [5]. All these laws were transcripts of the same original customs, by which the ancestors of all these nations had been governed in the wilds of Germany and Scandinavia [6].

Different laws in England.

After these nations were firmly established in their new settlements, at a great distance from each other, their laws began by degrees to be-

3 Tacit de Morib. German. c. 19. 4 Id. c. 21.
5 Vide Lindenbrog. Cod. Leg. Antiq. Wilkins Leges Saxon.
6 Lindenbrog. Prolegomena.

come a little different. But this difference, for ſeveral centuries, conſiſted chiefly in the various rates of thoſe mulcts or fines that were exacted from thoſe who were guilty of certain crimes, according to the greater plenty or ſcarcity of money in their reſpective countries. By the difference of theſe fines, the ſame crime might then have been committed in one country of Europe for half the money that it would have coſt in another. This ſeems to have been the chief, if not the only difference between the three ſyſtems of laws that were eſtabliſhed in England in this period, viz. the Weſt-Saxon law, the Mercian law, and the Dane law. For this at leaſt we have the teſtimony of one of our moſt learned antiquaries; which can hardly be better expreſſed than in his own words: "Our Saxons, "though divided into many kingdoms, yet were "they all one in effect, in manners, laws, and "language: ſo that the breaking of their govern-"ment into many kingdoms, or the reuniting of "their kingdoms into a monarchy, wrought "little or no change among them, touching "laws. For though we talk of the Weſt-Saxon "law, the Mercian law, and the Dane law, "whereby the weſt parts of England, the middle "parts, and thoſe of Suffolk, Norfolk, and the "north, were ſeverally governed; yet held "they all an uniformity in ſubſtance, differing "rather in their mulcts than in their canon; "that is, in the quantity of fines and amerce-"ments,

" ments, than in the courſe and frame of " juſtice[7]."

Remarkable ſingularity in the juriſprudence of the middle ages.

It will not therefore be neceſſary to take any further notice of this diſtinction in our Anglo-Saxon laws, by which different mulcts were exacted of criminals, and different values were ſet on the lives and limbs of men, in the weſt, the middle, and the north parts of England, except it be to acquaint ſuch readers as do not already know it, that ſimilar diſtinctions obtained in the laws of all the other countries of Europe in this period; which occaſioned the following ſingularity in the juriſprudence of the middle ages. When a perſon removed from one kingdom or province into another, he did not change his law, but his life and limbs continued to be valued at the ſame rate they had formerly been; and any injury that was done to him was compenſated according to the laws of his native country, and not according to thoſe of the country in which he reſided[8]. This gave thoſe perſons who removed from a rich country into a poor one, much greater, and thoſe who removed from a poor country into a rich one, much leſs, ſecurity for their lives, limbs, and properties. The noſe of a Spaniard, for example, was perfectly ſafe in England, becauſe it was valued at thirteen marks; but the noſe of an Engliſhman run a great riſk in Spain, becauſe it was valued only at twelve ſhillings. An Engliſhman might

7 Reliquiæ Spelman. p. 49. 8 Murat. Diſſertazione, t. 1. p. 282.

have broken a Welſhman's head for a mere trifle; but few Welſhmen could afford to return the compliment [9].

The firſt written laws ſhort, &c.

It is not to be imagined, that the firſt written ſyſtems of the ancient laws of the Anglo-Saxons, and other nations, who acquired the dominion of Europe in the fifth and ſixth centuries, were very complete. The uſe of letters, in all theſe nations, was then in its infancy, and very few of the laity in any of them could either read or write. When they began therefore to put their laws in writing, they were frugal of their words, and put down, with great brevity, only ſome of the moſt capital points, leaving many others in their former ſtate; which gave birth to that important diſtinction between the ſtatute or written, and the common or unwritten law, which ſtill ſubſiſts. This too is one of the chief cauſes of the great brevity, obſcurity, and variations, obſervable in the moſt ancient codes of all the preſent nations of Europe; ſome particulars having been made ſtatute law in one country, that were left in the ſtate of common law in another. Whoever, therefore, would give a juſt account of the juriſprudence of our Anglo-Saxon anceſtors, muſt be no ſtranger to the cotemporary laws of all the other nations of Europe, which are the beſt commentary on thoſe of England in this period.

9 Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 4, n. and p. 71.

None

None of our readers will expect, or desire, a complete system of the statute and common law of England in the Anglo-Saxon times, with a full illustration of each particular, in this place. This is the province of the lawyer rather than of the historian, who must content himself with giving a view of the general spirit, and most important particulars, of the laws of his country in every period. For his further satisfaction, the reader will find in the Appendix, a translation of the laws of some of the best of our Anglo-Saxon kings [10].

A complete system of laws not intended.

The laws of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors, and of all the northern nations, relating to the matrimonial union of the sexes, were, in some respects, curious, and merit our attention. These laws are always of great importance to society; being very pernicious when they are imprudent or unnatural, and very beneficial when they are agreeable to nature and good policy. The great fundamental law, so clearly pointed out by nature, of the union of one man and one woman, was firmly established among all these nations in very ancient times; but the manner of forming this union, and the rights of the contracting parties, were a little singular. Though all these nations treated the sex with the most respectful attention, yet they considered every woman as under the protection or guardianship of some man or other during her whole life; without

Matrimonial laws.

[10] See Append. N° 3.

whose

whoſe conſent ſhe could not execute any legal deed [11]. Whether this was a proper teſtimony of their regard for the weaker ſex, may be juſtly queſtioned; but the fact is undeniable. This protection, or guardianſhip, was called, in the Saxon language, *mund*; and the perſon who had a right to it, *mundbora*, who could not be deprived of this right without his own conſent, obtained by a proper conſideration [12]. The father was the natural and legal guardian of his unmarried daughters;—the brothers, after the father's death, of their unmarried ſiſters;—the neareſt male relation of thoſe who had neither fathers nor brothers;—the male heir of the huſband was the guardian of the widow;—and the king was the legal guardian and protector of all thoſe women who had no other [13]. When a young man therefore propoſed to make his addreſſes to a lady, one of the firſt ſteps he took, was to procure the conſent of her mundbora or guardian, by making him ſome preſent ſuitable to his rank and that of the lady. This preſent was called the *mede* or *price*, and, in the barbarous Latin of the middle ages, *metha* or *methum*; which gave occaſion to its being ſaid, that in thoſe times men bought their wives [14]. If any man was ſo raſh as to marry a woman without the conſent of her guardian, he not only incurred the ſevere penalties inflicted on thoſe who were guilty

[11] Muratori Antiq. t. 2. p. 113. Stiernhook de Jure Sueon. p. 153.
[12] Spelman. Gloſſ. p. 423. [13] Muratori Antiq. t. 2. p. 113, 114.
[14] Id. ibid. Du Cange Gloſſ. in voce.

of

of the crime of mundbreach, as it was called, but he obtained no legal authority over his wife, or any of her goods, by such a marriage; that authority still remaining in the guardian, who could not be divested of it without his own consent. Nay, so far was this idea carried, that if a woman who had been married without the consent of her guardian, was debauched, the damages recovered were not paid to her husband but to her guardian. To restrain avaricious guardians from demanding, and amorous youths from offering too great presents, for obtaining their consent, laws were made to limit the utmost extent of them, for people of all ranks [15]. When a man made his addresses to a widow, he was obliged to pay no more than one half of the limited price for the consent of her guardian, as a widow was estimated at no more than half the value of a maiden of the same rank [16]. As soon as the lover had obtained the consent of his mistress, and of her guardian, the parties were solemnly contracted, and one of the bridegroom's friends became surety to the woman's guardian, that she should be treated well, and maintained in a manner suitable to her station [17]. In this contract, the dowry which the husband settled upon his wife was fixed and ascertained; of which she was to enjoy the usufruct, and, in some cases, the property, if she proved the survivor. With

[15] Muratori Antiq. t. 2. p. 113, 114. Leges Wallicæ, p. 35.
[16] Leg. Longobard. l. 2. tit. 8. § 8.
[17] Spelman. Concil. p. 425.

respect

reſpect to the proportion of this dowry, the laws of the Anglo Saxons were more favourable to the ſex than thoſe of any other of the northern nations [18]. It was a cuſtom as inviolably obſerved as the moſt poſitive law, that all the friends and relations of both parties, within the third degree, were invited to the marriage-feaſt, and that all who were invited made a preſent of ſome kind or other to the bride and bridegroom [19]. The father, brother, or guardian of the bride, in particular, made a conſiderable preſent in furniture, arms, cattle, and money, according to the circumſtances of the family; which was called *faderfium (father-gift)*, and was all the fortune the huſband received with his wife [20]. No marriage could be lawfully celebrated without the preſence of the woman's guardian, who ſolemnized the marriage, by delivering the bride to the bridegroom with words to this purpoſe: "I give thee my daughter (ſiſter, or relation) "to be thy honour and thy wife, to keep thy "keys, and to ſhare with thee in thy bed and "goods. In the name of the Father, Son, and "Holy Ghoſt." After which, the prieſt pronounced the nuptial benediction [21]. Though the bridegroom had already been at much expence in procuring the conſent of the guardian, and ſettling a dowry on his wife, he was obliged,

[18] Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 18. Heineccii Op. t. 6. p. 113. Spel. Concil. p. 425. Stiernhook, p. 155. [19] Id. ibid.

[20] Heinec. t. 6. p. 117. Lindenbrog. Gloſſ. in voce. Spel. Gloſſ. in voce. [21] Stiernhook, p. 160.

both

both by law and cuſtom, to make her a valuable preſent on the firſt morning of their marriage, before he aroſe from bed, as a teſtimony of his entire ſatisfaction. This, which was called the *morgængife*, or *morning-gift*, was the pin-money of antiquity, and became the ſeparate property of the wife, with which the huſband had no concern [22]. It was found by experience, that ſome ladies, by their ſuperior charms, or ſuperior art, prevailed upon their huſbands, in theſe critical circumſtances, to make very extravagant morning-gifts; which produced poſitive laws in almoſt every country of Europe, reſtraining them within certain limits, in proportion to his eſtate [23]. Such were the matrimonial laws and cuſtoms of our Anglo-Saxon anceſtors; of which one great object ſeems to have been, to prevent unequal and clandeſtine marriages. They were evidently very favourable to the fair ſex, and to thoſe families who had many daughters; but whether any of them might be revived with advantage, it belongs not to a private perſon to determine.

When the matrimonial knot was once duly tied, among the ancient Germans, and the ſeveral nations deſcended from them, nothing but the death of one of the parties, or the infidelity of the wife to the marriage-bed, could diſſolve it [24]. After theſe nations had embraced the Chriſtian religion, they were ſtill further con- Concerning divorces.

22 Wilkins Leges Sax. p. 144. Leges Wallicæ, p. 80. et in Gloſſ. voce Cowyll. 23 Muratori, t. 2. p. 115.

24 Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 19, 20.

firmed

firmed in these sentiments; and the ties of marriage were esteemed very sacred and inviolable [25]. It cannot however be denied, that voluntary separations, and even divorces, became gradually too frequent, especially amongst the great; and that the monkish doctrines concerning the great merit of vows of chastity made by married persons, contributed not a little to this abuse. By the canon law, if either the husband or wife made a vow of chastity, the other party could not prevent a separation; and, which was still more unreasonable, could not marry another [26]. The laws of Wales permitted a man to repudiate his wife not only for adultery, but for such indecent behaviour as indicated a disposition to commit that crime; and the same laws allowed a woman to separate from her husband, without forfeiting her dowry, for so slight a cause as an unsavoury breath [27].

Authority of husbands.

The husband, who had regularly purchased the guardianship of his wife from her former guardian, succeeded to all his rights, became her lord and protector, the administrator of her goods, and the guardian of all the children of the marriage [28]. But though the authority of husbands, among all the northern nations who bought their wives, was very great; yet they seem to have exercised it with greater lenity than the Gauls, and other nations, who had not that

25 Spelman. Concil. p. 41. 52. 153. 26 Id. p. 269.
27 Leges Wallicæ, p. 80. 298. 28 Heinec. t. 6. p. 137.

cuſtom; and for this very reaſon perhaps, that their wives had coſt them money, and were conſidered as valuable poſſeſſions. By the laws of Wales (which were probably copied in this particular, as in many others, from thoſe of their neighbours the Engliſh) a huſband was allowed to give his wife three blows with a ſtick on any part of the body except the head, if he catched her in bed with another man—if ſhe ſquandered away his goods—if ſhe pulled him by the beard —or if ſhe gave him opprobrious names; but if he beat her either more ſeverely, or for more trifling cauſes, he was fined [29].

Paternal authority.

The paternal authority among the ancient Germans, and the nations deſcended from them, did not extend to the power of life and death, as amongſt the Gauls; but parents, in all theſe nations, had a right to correct their children with becoming ſeverity, to regulate their conduct, to ſell their daughters to huſbands with their own conſent, and even to ſell both their ſons and daughters into ſlavery, to relieve themſelves from extreme neceſſity [30]. In every clan or tribe of the Welſh in this period, there was one perſon who was ſtyled the *pencenedl*, or *head of the tribe*, who had conſiderable authority over all the families in it, who tranſacted nothing of importance without his knowledge and conſent [31]. This officer, who was choſen by all the heads of fa-

29 Leges Wallicæ, p. 387.
30 Cæſar de Bell. Gal. l. 6. c. 19. Heinec. t. 6. p. 62.
31 Leges Wallicæ, p. 164.

milies,

milies, was considered as the common parent of the whole tribe, the supreme judge in all genealogical questions about the admission of persons into the clanship, and was intitled to a present from every man who married any woman under his protection [32].

Laws relating to compacts, &c.

The laws of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors, for the regulation of bargains, compacts, and agreements of various kinds;—for the security of real and personal estates—for the recovery of just debts—for establishing mutual confidence and good faith among the members of society—and for pointing out the legal methods of obtaining justice in all these particulars, are too numerous to be here inserted, and would form a body of law rather than an article of history [33]. Before the use of writing became common, all considerable bargains, compacts, and agreements of every kind, were transacted in the presence of some magistrate, or in the hundred or county court; that if any dispute arose concerning them, the most unexceptionable witnesses might not be wanting [34]. Still further, to prevent mistakes about the terms and conditions of these transactions, they were sometimes written in the blank leaves of some church-bible, which was considered as an authentic record [35]. The laws against insolvent debtors were very severe; and

32 Leges Wallicæ, p. 164. 184.

33 Vide Wilkins Leges Saxon. passim. et Leges Wallicæ.

34 Hickesii Dissertatio Epistolaris, p. 30. 35 Id. p. 22, 23.

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their creditors were permitted not only to ſtrip them of every thing, and to impriſon their perſons, but even to reduce them to ſlavery [36]. To inſpire men with a regard to character in their dealings, notorious rogues and cheats were laid under many inconveniencies. They were not admitted into any decennary, nor ſuffered to bear teſtimony in any court of juſtice; and if they became very infamous, they had their noſes cut off, or their heads ſcalped, that all men might know and avoid them [37].

Laws of ſucceſſion.

The laws of our Anglo-Saxon anceſtors not only provided for the ſecurity of men's properties during life, but alſo directed and regulated the ſucceſſion to them, and that in a manner very agreeable to the natural wiſhes and deſires of mankind. When a father died and left children, they were his heirs, as being deareſt unto him, and moſt dependent upon him [38]. If theſe children were all ſons, there can be no doubt that the poſſeſſions of their common parent were equally, or almoſt equally, divided amongſt them; or if they were all daughters, the diviſion was alſo equal: but when ſome of them were ſons, and others daughters, it is not certainly known, whether the daughters ſhared equally with the ſons or not, in the moſt ancient times. By the laws of the Saxons on the continent, daughters did not ſhare equally with the ſons;

36 Heinec. t. 6. p. 15. 37 Wilkins Leges Saxon p. 103. 137, 138.
38 Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 20.

and this, it is probable, was alſo the law of thoſe who ſettled in this iſland [39]; though there is a law of king Canute which ſeems to make no diſtinction between ſons and daughters [40]. By the laws of Wales in the tenth century, a daughter received only half the proportion which a ſon inherited of their father's poſſeſſions [41]. When a man at his death had no children, his neareſt relations were his heirs; which are thus deſcribed: "If any one die without children, if his father "and mother be alive, they ſhall be his heirs; "if his father and mother are dead, his brothers "and ſiſters ſhall be his heirs; but if he hath no "brothers or ſiſters, the brothers and ſiſters of "his father and mother ſhall be his heirs, and "ſo on to the fifth degree, according to proxi-"mity of blood [42]." When none appeared to claim a ſucceſſion, or when they could not make good their claim, the whole fell to the king. Such were the laws of ſucceſſion among our Anglo-Saxon anceſtors; different in ſeveral reſpects from thoſe which are obſerved at preſent, and which were introduced, with many other feudal cuſtoms, after the Norman conqueſt.

Laws relating to teſtaments.

Though the above rules of ſucceſſion ſeem to have been agreeable to the moſt natural feelings of the human heart, yet it might often happen, that perſons who had no children, or very near

39 Lindenbrog. p. 476. 40 Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 144.

41 Leges Wallicæ, p. 88.

42 Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 20. Lindenbrog. p. 460. Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 266.

relations,

relations, might wiſh to diſpoſe of their poſſeſſions to others than thoſe that were pointed out by law. But this the ancient Germans could not do, becauſe they were ſtrangers to the uſe of laſt-wills or teſtaments, as the Anglo-Saxons probably were at their firſt ſettlement in this iſland [43]. Thoſe German and northern nations, however, who abandoned their native ſeats, and erected kingdoms in Italy, France, Spain, and Britain, ſoon became acquainted with, and adopted this method of conveying their eſtates, which they found practiſed by the Romans, and other inhabitants of theſe countries. After the converſion of theſe nations to Chriſtianity, they were inſtructed and encouraged in this mode of eluding the ſtrict laws of ſucceſſion, and conveying their eſtates by will, for very obvious reaſons. Accordingly we may obſerve, that the moſt ancient Anglo-Saxon teſtaments that have been preſerved and publiſhed, are agreeable to the Roman forms, and contain very valuable legacies to the church, for the benefit of the ſouls of the teſtators, and of their anceſtors [44]. The method of diſpoſing of their poſſeſſions by will, agreeable to their inclinations, and for the good of their ſouls, which was firſt adopted by kings and great men, ſoon became ſo common, and ſo fatal to the intereſts of legal heirs, that it was found neceſſary to lay it under ſome reſtraints by poſi-

43 Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 20.

44 Hickeſii Diſſertatio Epiſtolaris, p. 50—63.

tive laws. By a law of Alfred the Great, all perſons were reſtrained from alienating from their natural and legal heirs, eſtates which had deſcended to them from their anceſtors, if the firſt purchaſers had directed, either in writing, or before credible witneſſes, that theſe eſtates ſhould remain in the family, and deſcend to their poſterity; which ſufficiently proves, that entails are very far from being novelties in the laws of England [45]. A man who had children was prohibited, by the laws of Wales, from leaving any legacies from his children, except a mortuary to the church, or a ſum of money for the payment of his debts [46]. But as the ignorance and ſuperſtition of the people, the influence and avarice of the clergy, increaſed, entails, and all other legal reſtraints, which had been contrived to prevent men from ruining their families to enrich the church, were removed, and every man was encouraged to leave as much to the church as poſſible. "The thirteenth cauſe (ſays Muratori) "of the great riches of the church, was the pious "manners of thoſe ancient times, when fathers "and councils earneſtly exhorted all Chriſtians "to give, or at leaſt to leave, by their teſta-"ments, a great proportion of their eſtates for "the redemption of their ſouls; and thoſe good "men who complied with theſe exhortations, "were ſaid to have made Chriſt one of their "heirs. By degrees, there was hardly any man

45 Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 43. 46 Leges Wallicæ, p. 76.

"died,

" died, without leaving a conſiderable legacy to " the church; and if any perſon neglected to " make a will, and do this, he was eſteemed an " impious wretch, who had no concern for the " ſalvation of his ſoul, and his memory was in- " famous. To wipe off this infamy, it inſen- " ſibly became a cuſtom for the biſhop to make " wills for all who died inteſtate in his dioceſe, " and to leave as much to the church as the " perſons themſelves ſhould have done, if they " had made wills. This good office (as I " imagine) was at firſt done with the conſent, " and perhaps at the requeſt, of the heirs of " the deceaſed; but in proceſs of time it be- " came an eſtabliſhed cuſtom, and acquired the " force of a law, particularly in England[47]." Is it poſſible, that preſumption on the one hand, and ſimplicity on the other, could be carried to a greater height?

Penal laws.

No laws, however juſt and prudent, have ever been found ſufficient, in any country, to ſecure the peace and good order of ſociety, and protect the properties, characters, and perſons of men, from all injuries, merely by the force of their internal rectitude. Nor was there ever any nation in the world that could afford to beſtow particular premiums upon all who obeyed its laws, in order to engage them to obedience by the hopes of theſe rewards. It became univerſally neceſſary, therefore, to enforce obedience, by

47 Murator. Antiq. t. 5. p. 654.

the fear of punishments in case of disobedience; which gave rise in all parts of the world to those laws which are called criminal or penal laws, because they forbid crimes, and threaten penalties. The penal laws of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors were in several respects curious, and merit a short attention.

The spirit of the Anglo-Saxon penal laws was to repair the injury.

In general, we may observe, that after the Anglo-Saxons embraced the Christian religion, they were subjected to double penalties for all their crimes; one of which was inflicted by the canons of the church, and the other by the laws of the state. Thus, for example, a person convicted of wilful murder was obliged, by the canons of the church, to live seven years on bread and water, as well as to pay all the penalties which the laws of the land required. But as the censures of the church are not so properly the subject of the present inquiry, it may be sufficient to refer the reader for an account of them to the books quoted below [48]. It may be further observed, that as the great object of the Anglo-Saxon penal laws was to repair and make amends for injuries, rather than to punish crimes, they made little difference between injuries done through deliberate malice, and those done in a sudden transport of passion, or even by mere accident. It was a maxim in their law, as well as a proverb in common conversation, "Unwil-

[48] Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 89—93. Spelman Concil. p. 460—468. Johnson's Canons, A. D. 963.

"lingly offend, willingly amend[49]." This diſtinction, however, was too obvious and important to be quite diſregarded; and therefore Canute the Great commands, in one of his laws, that ſome little difference ſhould be made between a wilful and an accidental offender[50]. From the ſame principle, capital puniſhments were very rare amongſt the Anglo-Saxons; becauſe a man's death could not repair the injuries which he had done by his crimes. Our more particular obſervations on the penal laws of this period muſt be chiefly confined to thoſe which were deſigned to repair the injuries which men ſuſtained in their properties by theft and robbery, in their characters by calumny, and in their perſons by maiming and murder. The injury done, indeed, by this laſt crime, was irreparable to the perſon injured; and therefore the reparation was made to the king for the loſs of his ſubject, and to the family for the loſs of their friend.

Laws againſt theft.

Theft was one of the moſt common crimes in the period we are now conſidering; and therefore a great number of laws were made againſt thoſe who were guilty of it. In the early part of this period, theft of the worſt kind, even when it was committed in a church, in the king's palace, or a biſhop's houſe, did not expoſe the thief to any corporal puniſhment. But even then the compenſation he was obliged by law to

49 Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 277. 279. 50 Id. p. 142.

make rendered ſtealing a very loſing trade when it was detected. By the laws of Ethelbert, the firſt Chriſtian king of Kent, if a thief ſtole from a church, he was obliged to reſtore twelve-fold; from a biſhop, eleven-fold; from the king, or from a prieſt, nine-fold; from a deacon, ſix-fold; and from other clerks, three-fold[51]. Where, by the bye, we may obſerve how ſoon the goods of the church and of the biſhop began to be eſteemed more inviolable than thoſe of the king. By degrees it was found neceſſary to make more ſevere laws againſt this crime, which continued to increaſe. By a law of Withred king of Kent, who flouriſhed about a century after Ethelred, a thief who was catched in the act of ſtealing, might be killed with impunity, if he attempted either to fly, or to make reſiſtance[52]. Ina king of Weſſex, who was cotemporary with Withred, proceeded a ſtep further, and declared theft a capital crime; but allowed the thief, or his friends, to redeem his life, by paying his *were*, or the price at which his life was valued by the law, according to his rank in ſociety[53]. This ſeems to have continued to be the general principle of the Anglo-Saxon laws, with regard to thoſe who were convicted of having ſtolen any thing of conſiderable value. This value was fixed by the laws of king Athelſtan, A. D. 926, at eight pence, equal in ef-

[51] Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 1, 2. See Append. N° 3.
[52] Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 12. [53] Id. p. 17.

ficacy

ficacy to fifty ſhillings of our money at preſent; and it was not long after raiſed to twelve pence[54]. The ſame king alſo raiſed the age at which a perſon might be condemned for theft, from twelve to fifteen years[55]. All who had been once convicted of theft, and had paid their *were*, or price of their life, were obliged to find ſureties for their good behaviour, or to ſwear, as the biſhop directed them, that they would ſteal no more; and if, after this, they were convicted of the ſame crime, they were to be hanged[56]. The accomplices and protectors of thieves, and thoſe who received and concealed ſtolen goods, knowing them to be ſtolen, were ſubjected to the ſame penalties with the thieves themſelves. The laws of Wales in this period, againſt theft, and indeed the laws of all the other nations of Europe, ſeem to have been nearly the ſame with thoſe of England[57]. The diſtinction between the puniſhing of theft as a crime, and exacting compenſation for it as an injury, which was the chief object of the penal laws of this period, is ſtrongly marked in the following law of Howel Dha: "If a thief is condemned to death, he "ſhall not ſuffer in his goods; for it is quite "unreaſonable both to exact compenſation, and "inflict puniſhment[58]." But theft was at length made a capital crime, without benefit of com-

54 Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 56. 65. 55 Id. p. 70.
56 Id. ibid.
57 Vide Leges Walliceæ, l. 3. c. 3. Heinec. t. 6. p. 442. 460.
58 Leges Walliceæ, p. 221.

penſation,

penſation, about forty years after the Norman conqueſt [59].

Laws againſt robbery.

Robbery, when it was committed by a troop of armed men, without the territories of the ſtate to which they belonged, was ſo far from being condemned as a crime, that it was commended as a brave and patriotic action, by the ancient Germans, and the nations deſcended from them [60]. All the laws of our Anglo-Saxon kings, in the times of the heptarchy, againſt robbery, were made with this reſtriction:—"Provided it was committed within the bounds of "our kingdom [61]." In the laws of Wales, there are many regulations for dividing the booty brought home by thoſe bands of robbers that went out from time to time to plunder the territories of the neighbouring ſtates; and of this booty the king, queen, and great officers of the court, had a conſiderable ſhare [62]. But though all thoſe nations, to enrich themſelves at the expence of their neighbours, and to keep their youth in the exerciſe of arms, encouraged external depredations, they diſcouraged internal robbery. By the laws of Ina king of Weſſex, A. D. 693, a robber within the kingdom was condemned to reſtore what he had taken, and to pay a fine of ſixty ſhillings; but if he was the leader of a gang of robbers above thirty-five in

59 Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 304.
60 Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 14.
61 Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 16.
62 Leges Wallicæ, p. 17.

number,

number, he was to pay the full price of his life, or his full *were*. By the laws of the ſame prince, a robber who broke into the king's or biſhop's houſe was to make ſatisfaction with one hundred and twenty ſhillings; into an alderman's, with eighty ſhillings; into a thane's, with ſixty ſhillings; and into the houſe of an inferior land-owner, with thirty-five ſhillings[63]. Theſe were certainly very moderate puniſhments for ſuch audacious criminals; and yet this ſeems to have been the law during the whole of this period, except that the mulcts were raiſed a little higher by Canute the Great, in the beginning of the eleventh century[64]. It is expreſsly declared in the ancient laws of Wales, that robbery ſhall never be puniſhed with death; "becauſe (ſay "theſe laws) it is a ſufficient ſatisfaction for "this crime, if the goods taken be reſtored, "and a fine paid to the perſon from whom they "were taken, according to his ſtation, for the "violence offered him, and another to the king "for the breach of the peace[65]." The extraordinary lenity of all thoſe laws, is a further proof, that compenſation, and not puniſhment, was their chief object. This is ſtill more conſpicuous in the laws againſt incendiaries, which obliged the unhappy man who had his houſe burnt by accident to pay all the damages done by the fire to the neighbouring houſes, as much as if he had been a voluntary malicious incen-

63 Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 16. 23.
64 Id. p. 143.
65 Leges Wallicæ, p. 230.

diary:

diary[66]: a moſt extravagant and unreaſonable law! which ſhews how careful legiſlators ought to be, what general principles they adopt, and that they do not purſue them too far.

Laws againſt calumny.

A good name was never more uſeful and neceſſary than in the period we are now delineating; becauſe, without that, no man could be admitted a member of any tithing or decennary, but was reputed a vagabond. It was probably for this reaſon that a calumniator was more ſeverely puniſhed by the laws of the Anglo-Saxons than a robber. By a law of Lotherc, who was king of Kent towards the end of the ſeventh century, a calumniator was obliged to pay one ſhilling to the perſon in whoſe houſe or lands he uttered the calumny, ſix ſhillings to the perſon he calumniated, and twelve ſhillings to the king[67]. But Edgar the Peaceable, who flouriſhed about two centuries after, made a much more ſevere law againſt this crime; by which it was decreed, that a perſon convicted of groſs and dangerous defamation ſhould have his tongue cut out, unleſs he redeemed it, by paying his full *were*, or the price of his life; and this law was confirmed by Canute the Great[68].

Laws for the preſervation of the peace.

To guard againſt perſonal injuries, to which a fierce and warlike people are exceeding prompt, many laws were made by the Anglo-Saxons for the preſervation of the public peace, and the

66 Leges Walliçæ, p. 228. 67 Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 9.
68 Id. p. 9. 78. 136.

preven-

prevention of affrays and quarrels, in which men might be in danger of being killed or wounded. By a law of king Ina, it was declared, that whoever broke the peace in the king's court, or in a biſhop's houſe, ſhould pay a mulct of one hundred and twenty ſhillings; in an alderman's houſe, eighty ſhillings; in a thane's houſe, ſixty ſhillings; in the houſe of an inferior landholder, thirty ſhillings [69]. The penalty againſt this offence was very much raiſed by a law of Alfred the Great; which declared, that if any man fought, or even drew his ſword, within the verge of the king's court, his life ſhould be at the king's mercy; and if his life was ſpared, that he ſhould pay his full *were* [70]. The verge of the court extended three miles and a half every way from the houſe in which the king lodged [71]. The penalties for the breach of the peace in cathedral churches were the ſame as in the king's court, viz. the loſs of life, or the payment of a full *were*; in middling churches, a mulct of one hundred and twenty ſhillings; in ſmaller churches that have a burying-place, of ſixty ſhillings; in very ſmall churches that have no burying-place, of thirty ſhillings [72]. Several laws were alſo made, with pretty ſevere penalties, againſt fighting and quarrelling in alehouſes [73].

69 Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 22. 70 Id. p. 36.
71 Id. p. 63. 72 Id. p. 126. 73 Id. p. 9.

Laws for the protection of criminals from ſudden violence.

If a fierce unpoliſhed people are too apt to offer perſonal injuries, they are ſtill more apt to reſent and revenge them with inſtantaneous and exceſſive violence. This made it neceſſary for the moſt ancient legiſlators of almoſt all nations to provide for the perſonal ſafety of criminals, and preſerve them from the immediate revenge and fury of thoſe whom they had offended. One means employed for this purpoſe by many nations, and particularly by our Anglo-Saxon anceſtors, was the appointing certain places to be ſanctuaries to all who took refuge in them; and giving authority to certain perſons of the higheſt rank and greateſt power, to defend all perſons who put themſelves under their protection from immediate violence. The king's court, and all churches, were declared ſanctuaries by the Anglo-Saxon laws; and criminals who fled to them were protected from violence for a certain time, that they might have an opportunity of making ſatisfaction for the injuries which they had done, and of compromiſing matters with thoſe whom they had offended[74]. By the ſame laws, kings and biſhops had authority to defend thoſe criminals who put themſelves under their protection, for nine days; and abbots and aldermen for three days; but if they did not make ſatisfaction within that time, they were then to be brought to juſtice, and puniſhed according to law[75].

74 Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 15. 35. 43. 75 Id. p. 63.

But

Punishments of personal injuries.

But as all the laws that were made for preventing personal injuries were often ineffectual, it was necessary to make other laws, for regulating the punishment to be inflicted upon, or rather the satisfaction to be made by, those who were guilty of these injuries. Those laws were very numerous; but it will be sufficient to take notice only of a few of those which regulated the satisfaction to be made for the three great injuries,—of wounding,—of killing,—and of violating the chastity of the fair sex.

Wounding.

By the laws of the Anglo-Saxons, and of all the other nations of Europe, in the middle ages, certain prices were set upon all the members of the human body, and upon bruises, maims, and wounds, in every part of it, according to their breadth, length, and depth, with a degree of accuracy and minuteness that is truly surprising. These prices of the several parts of the body, and of their wounds, maims, and bruises, were formed into a kind of book of rates, which every judge was obliged to get by heart before he could be admitted to sit in judgment [76]. When any person was convicted of having wounded another, the judge declared out of the doom-book, the price of a wound of such dimensions, in such a part of the body; and this the criminal was obliged to pay to the person wounded; and by a law of king Edmund it was declared, that no abatement could be

76 Leges Wallicæ, p. 186. Leges Saxon. edit. a Wilkin. p. 5, 6, 7.

made.

made[77]. The reader will find a copy of the moſt ancient of theſe doom-books in the laws of Ethelbert, the firſt Chriſtian king of Kent, in the appendix; and the moſt perfect one now extant is contained in the third book of the laws of Howel Dha[78]. If a phyſician was called, the criminal was alſo obliged to pay for the medicines, and for the maintenance both of the doctor and the patient till the cure was completed[79]. It is hardly neceſſary to obſerve, that this was a moſt unreaſonable ſyſtem of laws, and gave the rich a great advantage over the poor, which no doubt they frequently abuſed. But theſe laws were contrived to anſwer the great end of the juriſprudence of the middle ages, which was compenſation, without promoting ſufficiently the no leſs deſirable end of prevention.

Murder. The laws of the Anglo-Saxons againſt killing or murder were ſtill more unreaſonable; becauſe they attempted to make reparation for an injury which to the perſon who ſuffered it was irreparable. By theſe laws a certain price or value was ſet upon every man's life, from the ſovereign to the ſlave, according to his rank; and whoever killed any man was obliged to pay the price which the laws had ſet upon the life of a perſon of that rank. This price was called a man's *were* or *weregyld*, from *were* a man, and *gyldan*

77 Leges Saxon. p. 74.
78 See Append. N° 3. Leges Wallicæ, l. 3. c. 8. p. 275. to 279.
79 Id. p. 277.

to

to yield or pay, and made a capital article in the doom-book; as may be ſeen in the laws of king Athelſtan [80]. Theſe laws not only fixed the quantity of every man's *were*, but alſo directed to whom, and in what proportions, it ſhould be paid. The king's weregeld, for example, was two hundred and forty pounds, equal in quantity of ſilver to about ſeven hundred and twenty pounds, and in real value to ſeven thouſand two hundred pounds of our money; which was to be divided into two equal parts, the one of which was to be paid to the family of the murdered prince, as a compenſation for the loſs of their relation, and the other was to be paid to the public, for the loſs of their ſovereign [81]. The *were* of ſubjects of all ranks above ſlaves was paid, one half to the king, for the loſs of his ſubject, and the breach of his peace, and the other half to the family of the murdered perſon, for the loſs of their relation, and to extinguiſh their reſentment againſt the murderer; the former of which was called the *frith-bote*, from *frith* (peace) and *bote* (compenſation), and the latter *mæg-bote*, from *mæg* (kindred) and *bote* [82]. When a freeman killed his own ſlave, he had nothing to pay but a ſmall mulct to the king for breach of the peace; but when

[80] See Append. N° 3. [81] Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 72.

[82] Spelman. Gloſſ. in voce Fredum. Somner and Leye's Dictionar. Saxon. voc. frith-bote, and mæg-bote.

he killed the ſlave of another perſon, beſides this mulct to the king, he was obliged to pay the value of the ſlave to his owner, which was called *man-bote*, or *man's price*[83]. If a ſlave killed a freeman, the owner of the ſlave was obliged to pay both the frith-bote to the king and the mæg-bote to the family of the murdered perſon, or to put the murderer into their hands. When a ſlave killed his own maſter, he was put to death; becauſe, having no goods and no family, he could make no compenſation: when he killed one of his fellow-ſlaves, his maſter might puniſh him as he pleaſed.

Change in the laws againſt murder.

As all the near relations of a murdered perſon received a ſhare of his mæg-bote; ſo they contributed alſo their ſhare to the payment of theſe mulcts for any of their relations who were guilty of murder; which greatly diminiſhed the terror even of theſe penalties. King Edmund, who reigned from A. D. 940 to A. D. 946, being very deſirous of giving ſome check to the frequent murders occaſioned by the unreaſonable lenity of theſe laws, particularly of the laſt, procured a law to be made, that from thenceforth the murderer himſelf ſhould be the only object of the reſentment of the injured family; and that his relations ſhould not be obliged to pay any ſhare of the penalties[84]. But though

[83] Du Cange Gloſſ. voce *Man-bote*.

[84] Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 73.

this

this was an amendment, it was not ſufficient to produce the deſired effect; and therefore it was found neceſſary to depart from a maxim that had been too long eſtabliſhed in the juriſprudence of the middle ages,—" That there was no crime " that might not be expiated with money;" and to declare ſome crimes, and particularly ſome kinds of murder, inexpiable. By a law of king Ethelred, A. D. 1008, a murder committed within the walls of a church is declared to be inexpiable, without the ſpecial permiſſion of the king; and when the king granted this permiſſion (which was probably too often), the criminal was obliged to pay a mulct to the church for the violation of its protection, beſides the frith-bote to the king and the mægbote to the family[85]. Upon the whole, it is ſufficiently evident, that the penal laws of the Anglo-Saxons againſt murder were the ſame in ſubſtance with thoſe of their German anceſtors; among whom murder was compenſated by the payment of a certain number of cattle; of which the whole family received a ſhare[86]. It is no leſs evident, that theſe laws were unreaſonably gentle, and very ill calculated to prevent the commiſſion of this horrid crime among a fierce people, who had arms continually in their hands.

[85] Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 113.

[86] Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 21.

Puniſhments for violating the honour of the fair ſex.

As the fair ſex are naturally weaker than men, and are expoſed to injuries of a peculiar kind, ſo their perſons and their honour have been protected in all civilized countries by particular laws. This is not the proper place to ſpeak of thoſe violations of chaſtity to which the woman was conſenting; becauſe, being equally guilty, ſhe was equally puniſhed with the other party. Only it may not be improper to obſerve, that the laws of the Anglo-Saxons, like thoſe of their German anceſtors, againſt adultereſſes, were very ſevere [87]. By an ordinance of king Canute, an adultereſs, beſides being declared infamous for life, and forfeiting all her goods, was condemned to have her noſe and lips cut off, that ſhe might no longer be an object of criminal deſires [88]. The Engliſh laws of this period inflicted certain pecuniary penalties on thoſe who were guilty of any attempts againſt the virtue and honour of the ſex, from the ſlighteſt indecency to the rudeſt violence; and theſe penalties were greater or ſmaller according to the rank of the injured party. The compenſation for a rape committed upon a nun, was as high as for murder, beſides the deprivation of Chriſtian burial; but one committed on a perſon of immature age, ſubjected the criminal to a mutilation which effectually prevented the repetition of the crime [89].

87 Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 19.

88 Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 142.

89 Id. p. 40. 72.

The

The chaſtity of the ſex was guarded with great anxiety and care by the ancient laws of Wales [90].

Penalties were alſo inflicted by the Anglo-Saxon laws on thoſe who were guilty of ſeveral other crimes, which do not fall directly under any of the three preceding heads; as idolatry, ſorcery, witchcraft, perjury, forgery, coining, and high treaſon againſt the whole people, &c. [91]. But theſe penalties were likewiſe, for the moſt part, pecuniary: only coiners of baſe money were condemned to loſe their right hands; and traitors againſt the whole nation were to be put to death, becauſe no compenſation could be made to a whole people for ſo great an injury [92]. In a word, the compenſation of injuries, rather than the puniſhment of crimes, ſeems to have been the great object of the penal laws of the Anglo-Saxons, and of all the other nations of Europe, in the middle ages; which is the true reaſon that pecuniary puniſhments were ſo frequent, and corporal and capital puniſhments ſo uncommon, in thoſe ages. Puniſhments of ſeveral crimes.

As crimes are commonly committed with great ſecrecy, the innocent are ſometimes ſuſpected and accuſed, and criminals often conceal and deny their guilt. To diſcover the truth, that the innocent may not be condemned, nor the Laws of evidence.

90 Leges Wallicæ, p. 78.

91 Vide Wilkins et Lambard Leges Saxon. paſſim.

92 Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 59. 103.

guilty acquitted, is one of the moſt neceſſary and difficult duties of the judicial office; and therefore the laws of evidence, which have been made in every period, to direct judges in the inveſtigation of the truth, are of very great importance, and merit our attention. This ſubject is remarkably curious in the preſent period; becauſe the laws of evidence in England, and over all Europe, were then exceeding ſingular, and different from what they are at preſent.

Oaths. Oaths, or ſolemn appeals to heaven, have been the moſt ancient and moſt univerſal means employed in courts of juſtice, to engage men to declare the truth: and they were never more frequently employed for this purpoſe than in the period we are now delineating; for in all actions, both civil and criminal, both parties appeared in the field of battle, attended by a prodigious number of witneſſes (ſometimes above a thouſand on one ſide), who were drawn up like two regular armies, and diſcharged whole vollies of oaths at one another.

Compurgators. When any perſon was judicially accuſed of any crime which he denied, he was obliged, in the firſt place, to purge himſelf, as it was called, by his own oath, and to bring ſuch a number of other perſons as the law required in that caſe, to give their oaths, that they believed him to be innocent, and that he had ſworn the truth [93].

93 Leges Wallicæ, p. 134.

Theſe

Theſe perſons were commonly called his *compurgators*, becauſe their oaths contributed with his own to clear him from the crime of which he had been accuſed. Many laws were made in England, and in all the other countries of Europe, for regulating the numbers, qualities, and other circumſtances of theſe compurgators; who made a diſtinguiſhed figure in the juriſprudence of the middle ages [94]. When a perſon accuſed produced the number of compurgators required by law, he was ſaid to have purged himſelf by ſuch a number of hands; becauſe each of the compurgators laid one of his hands on the goſpels, or on certain relics, and the perſon accuſed laid his hand above all the reſt, and ſwore by God, and by all the hands that were under his, that he was not guilty; the truth of which, each of the compurgators who did not withdraw his hand, was preſumed to confirm by his oath [95]. In ſome caſes, two, three, or four hands, were ſufficient; but in others, much greater numbers, even forty, fifty, or a hundred, were required; though twelve, or twenty-four, ſeem to have been the moſt common numbers [96]. Theſe compurgators were to be perſons of unblemiſhed characters, near neighbours or relations of the perſon accuſed,

94 Lindenbrog. Codex Legum Antiquarum. Du Cange Gloſſ. in voc. Juramentum.

95 Id. ibid. Leges Alaman. apud Lindenbrog. p. 366.

96 Du Cange Gloſſ. in voc. Juramentum. Stiernhook de Jure Sueonum, p. 118. Leges Wallicæ, p. 217.

and of the ſame rank and quality[97]. If the criminal was a woman, both law and cuſtom required, that her compurgators ſhould alſo be women[98]. In other caſes, women were not admitted to be compurgators[99]. If the criminal produced the number of unexceptionable compurgators which the law required, and if all theſe compurgators took the oath of credulity or belief, as it was called, he was acquitted; but if he could not produce the number required, or if only one of that number refuſed to take the oath, he was condemned[100].

Compurgators not the ſame with jurymen.

Some writers, eminent for their learning, and particularly for their knowledge of our antiquities and laws, have been of opinion, that the compurgators of the middle ages were the genuine predeceſſors of the jurors or jurymen of later times[101]. This opinion, though ſupported by great names, is liable to ſtrong objections; and any reader who attentively conſiders the deſcription of compurgators that is given above, will perceive that they were very different in many reſpects from our modern juries. They ſeem to bear a greater reſemblance to thoſe witneſſes who do not pretend to know any thing of the fact in queſtion, but are brought to ſpeak to the character of the perſon upon trial.

97 Leges Wallicæ, p. 98. 115. 98 Id. p. 108. 79.
99 Hiſt. Elienſ. c. 84. 100 Leges Wallicæ, p. 134.
101 Spelman. Gloſſ. in voc. Jurata. Selden. Janus Anglorum, l. 2. c. 4. Lord Kames's Hiſtorical Law-tracts, ſecond edit. p. 76.

The

Witneſſes.

The compurgators were not the only perſons who gave their oaths in trials, in the middle ages; for beſides theſe, great numbers of witneſſes were ſworn on both ſides, to confirm, or to invalidate the charge [102]. But the oaths of witneſſes and compurgators were very different. Witneſſes ſwore that they knew the things which they teſtified to be true: compurgators ſwore only, that they believed the oath which had been given by the defendant was true [103].

Ceremonies in adminiſtering oaths.

This great multiplicity of oaths in the judicial proceedings of the middle ages, had the ſame effect that it will always have, of diminiſhing men's veneration for them, and giving occaſion to frequent perjury. The legiſlators of thoſe times employed ſeveral devices to prevent this, by awakening the conſciences, and keeping alive the religious fears of mankind. With this view, their oaths were couched in the moſt awful forms of words that could be invented; and theſe forms were frequently changed, that they might not loſe their effect by becoming too familiar [104]. An oath was not to be adminiſtered to any perſon unleſs he was perfectly ſober, and even faſting [105]. Oaths were commonly adminiſtered in a church; and for this reaſon courts were held in or near a place of public worſhip [106]. The perſon who

102 Leges Wallicæ, p. 132. 103 Id. p. 136.
104 Hickeſii Diſſert. Epiſt. p. 112. Wilkins Leges Saxon. l. 63, 64.
105 Du Cange, p. 1607. 106 Id. ibid.

took

took the oath, was obliged to lay his right hand upon the altar,—or upon the goſpels,—or upon a croſs,—or upon the relics of the moſt venerated ſaints [107]. Theſe, and the like circumſtances, were well calculated to make a ſtrong impreſſion on men's imaginations in thoſe ages of ignorance and ſuperſtition. To rouſe a ſenſe of honour in the breaſts of the military men, their oaths were taken with their hands upon their arms [108]. This laſt ceremony was much uſed by the Danes and Saxons, and eſteemed by them a moſt inviolable obligation to declare the truth. The curious reader will meet with a deſcription of ſome very ſingular ceremonies that were ſometimes uſed in Wales, in the adminiſtration of oaths, in the book quoted below [109]. But after all the devices that were invented by the legiſlators of the middle ages, to give ſolemnity to oaths, it is very certain that perjury was very frequent, and one of the reigning vices of thoſe times.

Oaths weighed as well as numbered.

Another very remarkable ſingularity in the laws of evidence, both in England, and in other countries of Europe, in this period, was the method of aſcertaining the degrees of credit that were due to the oaths of perſons of different ranks. In thoſe times they weighed, as well as numbered oaths, and had a moſt curious ſtandard for performing that operation. This ſtandard was the

107 Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 12. Johnſon's Canons, A. D. 734.
108 Du Cange Gloſſ. p. 1617. 109 Leges Wallicæ, p. 85.

legal

legal weregeld, or price, that was ſet on the lives of perſons of all the different ranks in ſociety. As the weregeld of a thane, for example, was 1200 Saxon ſhillings, and that of a ceorl only 200 of the ſame ſhillings, the oath of one thane was eſteemed of equal weight with the oaths of ſix ceorls[110]. But this was certainly a fallacious ſtandard: for though it may be true in general, that the oaths of perſons of rank and fortune are more worthy of credit than thoſe of their inferiors, yet this general rule admits of many exceptions; and we have no reaſon to believe, that men's conſciences are ſo exactly proportioned to the weight of their purſes as this law ſuppoſes.

Origin of ordeals.

It is eaſy to perceive, from the above account of the laws of evidence, that it was no eaſy matter for the moſt innocent perſon to clear himſelf from an accuſation, eſpecially in thoſe caſes where a great multitude of compurgators was required. Many perſons, therefore, when they were accuſed of any crime, choſe rather to apply to Heaven for evidences of their innocence, than to be at the expence and labour of collecting ſo prodigious a maſs of human teſtimonies in their favour as the laws demanded. The greateſt part of the judges alſo, in thoſe times of ignorance, had neither patience nor penetration to ſift and examine the teſtimonies of contradicting witneſſes, or to inveſtigate the truth in perplexed and

[110] Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 64.

doubtful

doubtful cafes; and were therefore very willing to admit thofe proofs from Heaven, which were fuppofed to be perfectly decifive and unqueftionable. The clergy too fupported the authority of this celeftial evidence, as it gave them no little influence in all judicial matters. Thefe feem to have been the reafons that rendered trials by different kinds of ordeals fo frequent, and of fuch great authority, in the ages we are now examining; for all thefe ordeals were called *judicia Dei* (the judgments of God), and were confidered as fo many folemn and direct appeals to Heaven, to give teftimony to the guilt or innocence of perfons accufed of crimes, when human evidence could not be procured [111]. Agreeable to thefe ideas, all thefe ordeals were adminiftered by the clergy, and accompanied with many religious rites and ceremonies.

Different ordeals.

It is not neceffary to enumerate all the different kinds of ordeals that were ufed in England, and in the other countries of Europe, in this period. The moft common were the fix following:—the judicial combat,—the ordeal of the crofs,—the ordeal of the corfned,—the ordeal of cold water,—the ordeal of hot water,—the ordeal of hot iron.

Judicial combat.

The judicial combat being well fuited to the genius and fpirit of fierce and warlike nations, was one of the moft ancient and univerfal ordeals,

[111] Du Cange Gloff. in voc. Judicium Dei.

and particularly prevailed in Germany in very remote ages [112]. This method of trial was alſo in uſe in ſeveral countries on the continent in this period [113]. But as it is not mentioned in any of the Anglo-Saxon laws, and ſeems not to have been much uſed in England till after the conqueſt, the deſcription of it muſt be remitted to the third chapter of the next book of this work.

Ordeal of the croſs.

The croſs was an object of ſo much ſuperſtitious veneration in this period, that there is no wonder it was employed as an ordeal. It was indeed uſed to this purpoſe in ſo many different ways, that they cannot be all deſcribed. In criminal trials, the judgment of the croſs was commonly thus conducted: When the priſoner had declared his innocence upon oath, and appealed to the judgment of the croſs, two ſticks were prepared exactly like one another; the figure of the croſs was cut on one of theſe ſticks, and nothing on the other; each of them was then wrapped up in a quantity of fine white wool, and laid on the altar, or on the relics of the ſaints; after which a ſolemn prayer was put up to God, that he would be pleaſed to diſcover, by evident ſigns, whether the priſoner was innocent or guilty. Theſe ſolemnities being finiſhed,

[112] See vol. 1. ch. 3. p. 333.

[113] Leges Longobard. 2. tit. 51. l. 11. Neap. 2. tit. 32, 33. Muratori, t. 3. p. 633, &c.

a prieſt

a prieſt approached the altar, and took up one of the ſticks, which was uncovered with much anxiety. If it was the ſtick marked with the croſs, the priſoner was pronounced innocent; if it was the other, he was declared guilty [114]. When the judgment of the croſs was appealed to in civil cauſes, the trial was conducted in this manner: The judges, parties, and all concerned, being aſſembled in a church, each of the parties choſe a prieſt, the youngeſt and ſtouteſt that he could find, to be his repreſentative in the trial. Theſe repreſentatives were then placed one on each ſide of ſome famous crucifix; and at a ſignal given, they both at once ſtretched their arms at full length, ſo as to form a croſs with their body. In this painful poſture they continued to ſtand while divine ſervice was performing; and the party whoſe repreſentative dropped his arms firſt loſt his cauſe [115].

Ordeal of the corſned.

The corſned, or the conſecrated bread and cheeſe, was the ordeal to which the clergy commonly appealed when they were accuſed of any crimes; in which they acted a very prudent part, as it was attended with no danger or inconveniency [116]. This ordeal was performed in this manner: A piece of barley bread, and a piece of cheeſe, were laid upon the altar, over which

114 Spelman. Gloſſ. in voc. Crucis Judicium.

115 Murator. Antiq. t. 3. p. 624.

116 Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 128.

a prieſt

a prieſt pronounced certain conjurations, and prayed with great fervency, that if the perſon accuſed was guilty, God would ſend his angel Gabriel to ſtop his throat, that he might not be able to ſwallow that bread and cheeſe [117]. Theſe prayers being ended, the culprit approached the altar, took up the bread and cheeſe, and began to eat it. If he ſwallowed freely, he was declared innocent; but if it ſtuck in his throat, and he could not ſwallow (which we may preſume ſeldom or never happened), he was pronounced guilty.

Cold-water ordeal.

The ordeal of cold water ſeems to have been chiefly uſed in the trials of the common people. It was thus conducted: The perſon who was to be tried, was put under the direction of a ghoſtly father, of great reputation for his ſanctity, who obliged him to perform many extraordinary acts of devotion, and to keep a rigorous faſt for three days. When this faſt was ended, and the day appointed for the trial come, the priſoner was publicly conducted to the church, where the prieſt celebrated maſs; and before he permitted the accuſed to communicate, he addreſſed him in the following ſolemn ſtrain:—"I adjure thee, "O man, by the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, "by the true Chriſtianity which you profeſs, by "the only begotten Son of God, by the Holy "Trinity, by the Holy Goſpel, and by all the

[117] Muratori Antiq. t. 3. 619. Lindenbrog. p. 1307.

"holy

" holy relics in this church, that you do not " preſume to communicate, or approach this " holy altar, if you have committed this crime, " conſented to it, or known who committed it." If the priſoner made no confeſſion, the prieſt gave him the communion, ſaying, " Let this " body and blood of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be " received by you as a probation this day." After this a quantity of holy water was conſecrated, and then the whole company left the church, and went in proceſſion to the pool, where the ordeal was to be performed. When they arrived there, the prieſt gave the priſoner a drink of the holy water; ſaying, " Let this holy " water be to thee a probation this day." If the priſoner ſtill continued to deny his guilt, the prieſt then ſaid a long and very fervent prayer over the pool, adjuring it by every thing that was divine and venerable in heaven or on earth, that if the perſon to be thrown into it was guilty, it would reject him, and cauſe him to float upon its ſurface; but if he was innocent, that it would receive him into its boſom. The priſoner was then ſtripped naked, his hands and legs made faſt, and a rope tied about his middle, with a knot upon it, at the diſtance of a yard and a half from his body, and thrown into the pool. If he floated (which was hardly to be imagined) he was taken out, and declared guilty; if he ſunk ſo deep as to bring the knot on the rope under the water, he was inſtantly pulled out, before he could

could receive any injury, and pronounced innocent [117]. This ordeal was evidently a very uncertain teſt of guilt or innocence; but the great ſolemnity with which it was adminiſtered, might ſometimes ſtrike terror into the minds of criminals, and bring them to confeſſion. In this ordeal it was preſumed that God would work a miracle for the detection of guilt; in the two next ordeals of hot water and hot iron, the preſumption was, that he would work a miracle for the vindication of innocence: but there was no ſolid foundation for either of theſe preſumptions.

Hot water ordeal.

The preparations by faſtings, prayers, and other religious exerciſes, for the hot water ordeal, were of the ſame kind, and of the ſame duration, with thoſe that were uſed before the ordeal of cold water. When theſe private preparations were finiſhed, the perſon to be tried was conducted with great ſolemnity to the church, where the prieſt began, by ſaying certain prayers ſuitable to the occaſion; after which maſs was celebrated; and before the accuſed was permitted to communicate, he was adjured, in the moſt awful form of words, to confeſs if he was guilty. Fire was then kindled under a pot filled with water; and while the water was heating the prieſt ſaid many prayers compoſed

[117] Muratori Antiq. t. 3. p. 613—617. Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 61.

for that purpoſe. As ſoon as the water began to boil, a ſtone was ſuſpended in it by a ſtring, at the depth of one, two, or three palms, according to the nature of the accuſation. The pot was then taken down and placed by the ſide of the fire; and the priſoner having ſaid the Lord's prayer (not very rapidly we may preſume), and marked himſelf with the ſign of the croſs, plunged his naked hand and arm into the water, and ſnatched out the ſtone. His arm was inſtantly wrapped in linen cloths, and put into a bag, which was ſealed by the judge in the preſence of the ſpectators. The priſoner was then reſtored to the prieſt, who produced him in the ſame church at the end of three days; when the bag was opened, the bandages taken off, and the arm examined by twelve of his own friends, and twelve of the friends of the proſecutor. If any marks of ſcalding then appeared upon the arm, the priſoner was found guilty; if no ſuch marks could be diſcovered, he was acquitted [118].

Ordeal of hot iron.

The religious preparations for this ordeal were the ſame with thoſe for the former; and therefore need not be repeated. The ordeal of hot iron was of two kinds, and performed either with a ball of iron, or with a certain number of plough-ſhares. The former was conducted in this manner: A ball of iron was prepared, of

[118] Du Cange Gloſſ. in voc. Aquæ ferventis judicium.

one,

one, two, or three pounds weight, according to the nature of the accuſation. When all the prayers and other religious ceremonies were finiſhed, this ball was put into a fire, and made red-hot; after which it was taken out. The priſoner having ſigned himſelf with the croſs, and ſprinkled his hand with holy water, took the ball of hot iron in his hand, and carried it to the diſtance of nine feet; after which his hand was put into a bag, and ſealed up for three days; at the expiration of which it was examined, in the preſence of twelve perſons of each party. If any marks of burning appeared upon it, the accuſed was found guilty; if none, he was declared innocent [119]. The other way of performing this ordeal was, by making the perſon who was to be tried, to walk blindfolded, with his feet bare, over nine hot plough-ſhares, placed at certain diſtances. If he did this without being burnt, he was adjudged innocent; if not, guilty [120]. This ſeemingly dangerous ordeal of hot iron was appropriated to perſons of high rank.

If we ſuppoſe, that few or none eſcaped conviction who expoſed themſelves to theſe fiery trials, we ſhall be very much miſtaken. For the hiſtories of thoſe times contain innumerable examples of perſons plunging their naked arms into boiling water, handling red-hot balls of iron, and walking upon burning plough-ſhares,

Theſe ordeals not dangerous.

[119] Du Cange Gloſſ. voc. Ferrum candens. [120] Id. ibid.

without receiving the leaſt injury [121]. Many learned men have been much puzzled to account for this, and diſpoſed to think that Providence graciouſly interpoſed in a miraculous manner, for the preſervation of injured innocence. But if we examine every circumſtance of theſe fiery ordeals with due attention, we ſhall ſee ſufficient reaſon to ſuſpect that the whole was a groſs impoſition on the credulity of mankind. The accuſed perſon was committed wholly to the prieſt who was to perform the ceremony, three days before the trial, in which he had time enough to bargain with him for his deliverance, and give him inſtructions how to act his part. On the day of trial, no perſon was permitted to enter the church, but the prieſt and the accuſed, till after the iron was heated; when twelve friends of the accuſer, and twelve of the accuſed, and no more, were admitted, and ranged along the wall on each ſide of the church, at a reſpectful diſtance. After the iron was taken out of the fire, ſeveral prayers were ſaid, the accuſed drunk a cup of holy water, and ſprinkled his hand with it; which might take a conſiderable time, if the prieſt was indulgent. The ſpace of nine feet was meaſured by the accuſed himſelf with his own feet, and he would probably give but ſcanty meaſure. He was obliged only to touch one of the marks with the toe of his right foot,

[121] Du Cange Gloſſ. t. 3. p. 399, 400.

and

and allowed to ſtretch the other foot as far towards the other mark as he could; ſo that the conveyance was almoſt inſtantaneous. His hand was not immediately examined, but wrapped in a cloth, prepared for that purpoſe, three days. May we not then, from all theſe precautions, ſuſpect, that theſe prieſts were in poſſeſſion of ſome ſecret that ſecured the hand from the impreſſions of ſuch a momentary touch of hot iron, or removed all appearances of theſe impreſſions in three days; and that they made uſe of this ſecret when they ſaw reaſon? Such readers as are curious in matters of this kind may find two different directions for making ointments, that will have this effect, in the work quoted below [122]. What greatly ſtrengthens theſe ſuſpicions is, that we meet with no example of any champion of the church who ſuffered the leaſt injury from the touch of hot iron in this ordeal; but when any one was ſo fool-hardy as to appeal to it, or to that of hot water, with a view to deprive the church of any of her poſſeſſions, he never failed to burn his fingers, and loſe his cauſe [123].

If the Anglo-Saxon conſtitution, government, and laws, do not appear ſo excellent and perfect in all reſpects, in the above deſcription, as they have been ſometimes repreſented, and as the fond admirers of antiquity have been uſed to think them, the author of this work cannot help

[122] Du Cange Gloſſ. t. 3 col. 397. [123] Id. t. 1. p. 611.

it;

it; and hath nothing to say in his own defence, but that he hath used his best endeavours to discover the truth, to represent it fairly, and to guard against mistakes. It must, in particular, be evident to every intelligent reader, that many of their penal laws were founded on wrong principles; and many of their modes of trial led to wrong decisions.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

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